



# STRATEGY ILLUSTRATED BY BRITISH CAMPAIGNS



BY  
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WITH INTRODUCTION BY  
FIELD-MARSHAL EARL ROBERTS, K.P., V.C.

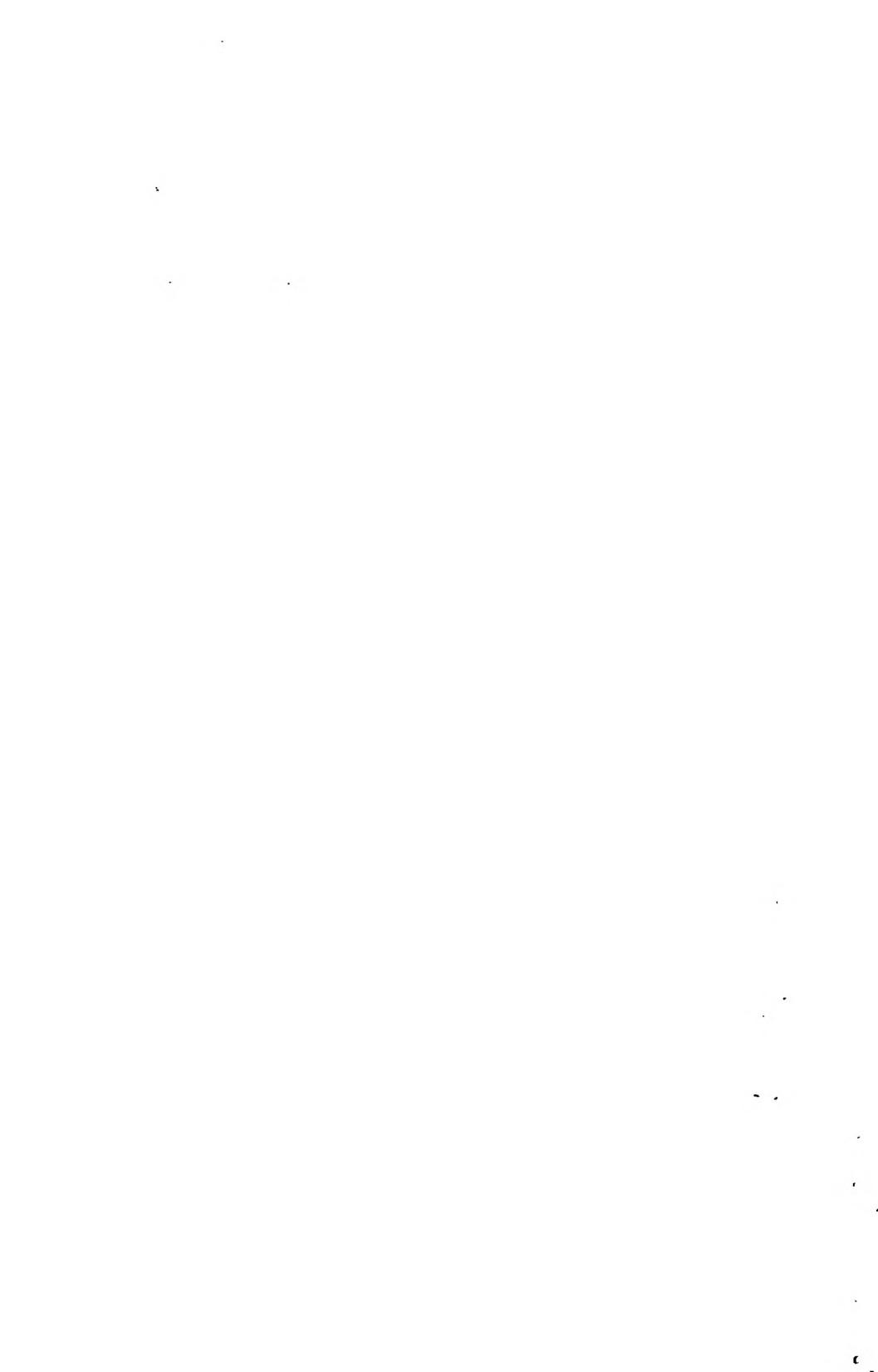
*INCLUDING TWELVE MAPS AND SEVEN PLATES*

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TO

My Mother.



## Introduction

BY FIELD-MARSHAL EARL ROBERTS, K.P., V.C.

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DEAR CAPTAIN MACQUOID

I have the pleasure to write a few lines of introduction to your book on "Strategy Illustrated by British Campaigns."

It is evident that you have carefully and intelligently studied the subject, and it seems to me that your book is likely to be extremely useful and instructive to students of the Art of War.

A true appreciation of the principles of Strategy is of the very first importance to all soldiers who aspire to rise in their profession. It is a study which appeals more to judgment and common-sense, and less to technical considerations, than is the case with tactics; and greater issues must always depend upon a proper understanding and application of the principles of Strategy than upon the result of a battle.

I am very pleased, therefore, to recognise in this work of yours a fresh attempt to arouse interest in, and direct serious attention to, this important subject.

There is undoubtedly much to be learnt from the study of British campaigns under British leaders—from their mistakes as well as from their successes—and I think your design of taking your illustrations almost exclusively from events in British Military History is calculated to enhance the interest of your book, and render it very instructive. I trust that it will find many readers.

Believe me

Yours very truly

(Signed) ROBERTS, F. M.

47, PORTLAND PLACE, W.

*26th August, 1904.*

## Author's Introduction.

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FOR a Captain of Indian Cavalry to write on Strategy may at first sight appear an undertaking at once too ambitious and too presumptuous. The author hastens therefore to say that this work is not intended for students of military history and literature who have advanced beyond the initial stages of this branch of the art of war, but is an elementary work on the principles which govern the strategical movements of troops by land, compiled by a Regimental officer for the use of Regimental officers.

The principles of tactics vary with every change and improvement of armaments. Soldiers with modern weapons in their hands do not fight according to the methods employed by their ancestors armed with the bow and arrow, lance and sword, or even with the firearms in use a decade ago.

But the principles of Strategy remain, and will remain, fairly constant. The reason for this is not far to seek. The geographical features of the globe, such as mountain barriers, rocks, deserts, etc., and the main avenues and lines of approach and retreat, which lead along and across them, have not altered, neither to any appreciable extent have other conditions, such as the seasons of the year and the climates of the various countries. Consequently these factors have the same influence now on every strategic combination that they possessed in ancient times, an influence which is almost wholly due to the limitations they impose on all movements of masses of men. The development of agriculture, the great increase in the material resources of many countries, the use of steam, electricity, and the telegraph,

which were unknown to the great leaders of comparatively recent times, have, of course, had their effect. But these have only modified, and not radically changed, the main principles of Strategy.

The principles which govern the strategical movements of troops on land remain, then, fairly constant, and this volume claims to be nothing more than a compilation of the axioms laid down by accepted authorities on Strategy. The author in no way pretends to compete with the strategic master-pieces of recognised authorities. He takes their theories and demonstrations as being of universal application and beyond all question far-reaching and accurate. His object is to impart a simple and elementary knowledge of the principles which govern strategic movements on land, so that, should those who study his pages be induced to read the military histories of our own and of foreign campaigns, they may start with an acquaintance with the subject which will the better and the more easily enable them to follow the various movements described, and the objects and causes of those movements.

It has always been a matter of wonder to the author that a British officer, desirous of studying that branch of the art of war called Strategy, should be compelled to turn in part to works of foreign authors, which naturally illustrate the principles of Strategy by campaigns undertaken by foreign nations under foreign generals. Even in English works by English authors, the great majority of examples quoted are from foreign campaigns. But British generals leading troops of the British Empire have fought in nearly every country of the five continents of the globe, and a glance at any atlas of the world is a sufficient proof, if any were needed, that the results of those campaigns have in the main been successful. Surely then it were preferable, in the first instance at any rate, for the British officer to study Strategy from British campaigns; to learn its principles from wars waged by soldiers of his own Empire, from the movements and operations of armies commanded by generals of his

own nation, and in which possibly his own ancestors may have borne their not ignoble part.

Marlborough proved himself superior to the European generals of his time; Wellington was in no way inferior to Napoleon's celebrated generals, Masséna, Marmont, Ney and Soult; and Napoleon himself at Waterloo, one of the decisive battles of the world, suffered defeat at the hands of his British protagonist.

Have we not to our credit Poitiers, Agincourt, Blenheim, Plassey, Assaye, Vitoria, Waterloo, Omdurman; victories of the first magnitude in the earlier campaigns of the Indian Peninsula; the battles of the Indian mutiny; campaigns in Afghanistan and on the Indian Frontier; successful campaigns on the continent of Africa, from Egypt in the north to Cape Colony in the south, from the shores of the Indian Ocean on the east to the Atlantic seaboard on the west? Can we learn no lessons from the campaigns of the Black Prince, Marlborough, Wellington, Wolseley, Roberts and Kitchener, not to mention a host of distinguished Indian—the so-called "Sepoy"—generals?

What foreign general who is now living, or has ever lived, can instruct the British officer better than the leaders of his own nation, in the proper Strategy of mountain warfare; in the best methods of forcing a passage through virgin forests; in the best mode of leading a river column; in all that relates to desert marches and operations generally in deserts and equally inhospitable countries; in all that concerns the defence of outlying posts and the relief of beleaguered garrisons; in the whole Strategy connected with the sieges—both in attack and in defence—of fortresses and fortified towns?

The greatest masterpieces of foreign find their counterpart in and are matched by British Strategy. British military history furnishes innumerable examples of campaigns fought over areas as extensive as any ever waged on the Continent of Europe. The strategic results of British campaigns with regard

to their effect on the history of the world have been as far-reaching as any that are to be found in, say, Napoleon's campaigns. There are many junior British officers who are well acquainted with the wars of the Napoleonic period—the campaigns of 1796, 1800, 1805, 1806, 1809, 1813–14–15—who are unacquainted with Wellington's operations in the Peninsula; there are many who can state off-hand the particular principle of Strategy illustrated by each of the campaigns of the years quoted, but could not expound the principles of Strategy illustrated by the Great Duke's operations in Spain and Portugal, and are entirely ignorant of the Strategy of equally important campaigns in North America and India.

It is desirable that officers of the British Army should study the principles of Strategy as applied to the conduct of British military operations. The peculiar feature, therefore, of this book is that all the examples are taken from the history of the British Army, and the author trusts that it may prove acceptable, not only to officers of the Regular and Auxiliary forces, but to all patriotic members of an Empire whose glory and whose true greatness are already far “beyond all Greek, all Roman fame.”

When the British officer is fully acquainted with the Strategy of campaigns undertaken by the British nation, let him then, if he will, turn his attention to those of Alexander, Hannibal and Frederick; to those of the great Napoleon, and especially to those of the Civil War in America. In the principles on which these were carried out he will find nothing new. He will find the same combinations, the same brilliant conceptions, and the same mistakes.

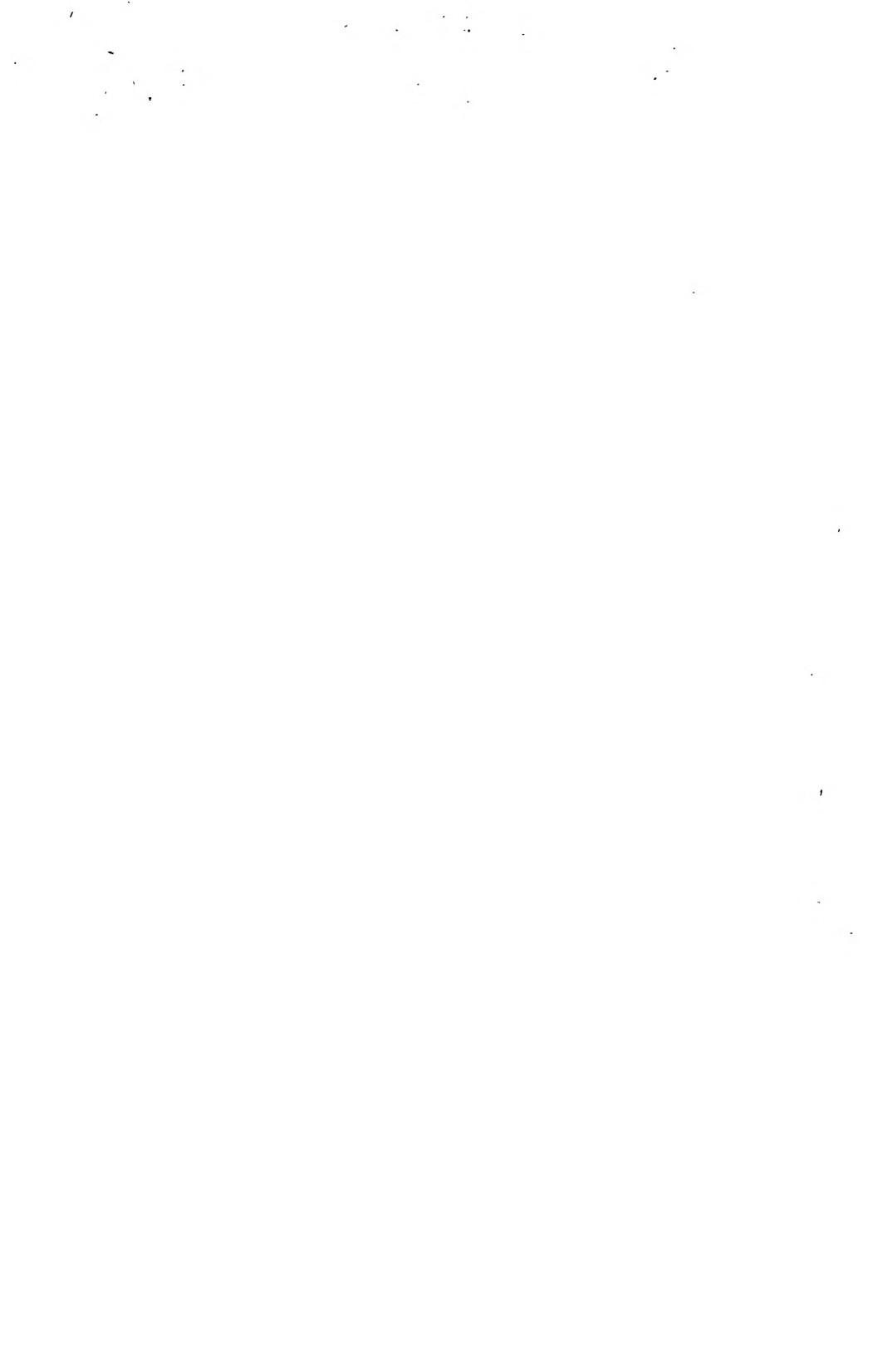
Some of the chapters—more especially those dealing with the principles of strategic manœuvre, obstacles, configuration of bases and of frontiers—are illustrated by means of diagrams. The use of these diagrams is not to be taken as an indication that the author is in favour of what may be called “geometrical” Strategy, or Strategy by diagrams. He makes use of diagrams for two reasons. First, to illustrate and render clearer the

meaning of the text, and secondly, because in his opinion they serve to fix that meaning upon the memory. Expressions such as "compelling an enemy to form front to flank," salient and re-entrant, concave and convex bases and frontiers, are definitions which occur and are met with in all works and discussions on Strategy. By diagrams these expressions are at once rendered intelligible. And, after all, what are the terms "salient," "re-entrant," "concave," or "convex" but geometrical definitions expressing the relations of lines to each other? The author is fully aware that strategic success is not to be found by following hard and fast rules never to be departed from, but is an elastic science or art, success in which is based primarily upon preparing adequately for war, upon a sound organisation of each and all the units which make up an army, upon penetrating and anticipating the designs of an enemy, upon logistic skill, and upon a variety of other conditions.

The author, whose time is fully occupied with duties connected with the supervision of the Imperial Service Troops of two great Indian States, has found his task no easy one, but he hopes that whatever shortcomings this volume may possess, it may not be found wanting in accuracy, and may prove both interesting and instructive to the class of readers to whom it is addressed.

In conclusion, he desires to acknowledge with thanks much valuable assistance received from Dr. T. M. Maguire, as well as the kind interest taken by him in the preparation of this volume.

*Hyderabad, Deccan, 1904.*



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# STRATEGY ILLUSTRATED BY BRITISH CAMPAIGNS.

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## Part I.

### THE PRINCIPLES OF STRATEGIC MANŒUVRE.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### LEADING PRINCIPLES.

Strategy Explained and Defined—The Five Principles of Strategic Manœuvre—Though Strategic Movements are limited to one or a combination of five principles only, yet Strategy is not on that account either simple or easy—The various Conditions and Influences which affect Strategy—Offensive and Defensive Strategy—Strategical and Tactical Movements Compared.

##### Strategy Explained and Defined.

WAR is a duel between two nations, but inasmuch as no two nations are exactly equal in individual characteristics, in size, wealth, resources, the numbers of men each can put into the field, or armaments, each nation will endeavour to make the utmost use of the particular advantages which it may happen to possess, whilst striving to counterbalance those of its opponents. Thus the movements of two armies before the shock of battle takes place may be likened to the manœuvres of two wrestlers, each striving to obtain the superior grip which will bring about the fall of his adversary. The lighter or smaller of two contestants will seek by superior quickness, activity and skill to compensate for the superior strength or size of the other. The manœuvres, twists, feints and stratagems employed by one wrestler to favourably grip and seize his opponent may be compared with the strategy of a campaign, while the pressure and force actually exerted by either contestant to bring about a fall may be likened to the tactics of a battle. And as in wrestling the superior grip with which an adversary seizes his opponent is often of itself sufficient to end the bout, without actually applying the force to bring about a fall, so too in war the superior strategy of one belligerent is often sufficient to attain the objective aimed at, without the necessity of actually defeating the enemy in battle; for if one belligerent, taken at a disadvantage and caught in the toils,

finds himself so unfavourably situated that the consequences of fighting would be but ruin and useless slaughter; then his only chance of escape lies in retreat, and should that, too, be impossible, reasons of humanity often decide in favour of surrender. The converse is likewise the case. For whereas in wrestling the consequences of the superior grip and hold of one contestant are frequently escaped by his antagonist's skill in avoiding the full effects of the fall, so, too, in war may the positive advantages which should be acquired from the superior strategical position of one army be negatived by superiority in tactics of the other.

By the simile of the two wrestlers an attempt has been made to fix the distinction between strategy and tactics, but the dividing line which determines where strategical movements end, and those of tactics commence, is very indeterminate and difficult of explanation. There are many definitions of strategy set forth by leading authorities of this branch of war.

"Strategy is the theory of the use of combats for the object of the war" (Clausewitz).

"Strategy is the art of properly directing masses upon the theatre of war, either for defence or invasion" (Jomini, p. 13).

"The theatre of war is the province of strategy—the field of battle is the province of tactics" (Hamley, p. 59).

"Strategy is the application of sound common sense to the conduct of war" (Moltke).

Strategy may be described as the art of so skilfully and efficiently directing the movements of armies that when contact with the forces of an enemy is about to take place, the forces which have been the more skilfully and efficiently directed will find themselves so advantageously situated that the enemy will either avoid or endeavour to avoid contact, or, should contact result, the probabilities and chances of victory will be against him.

"On the one hand, the strategic success is the successful preparation of the tactical victory; the greater this strategic success the more probable becomes the victory in the battle. On the other hand, strategic success lies in the making use of the victory gained. The more events the strategic combinations can in the sequel include in the consequences of a battle gained, the more strategy can lay hands on amongst the wreck of all that has been shaken to the foundation by the battle, the more it sweeps up in great masses what of necessity has been gained with great labour by many single hands in the battle, the greater will be its success."\*

Good strategy increases the chances of victory and minimises the consequences of defeat. A leader of armies may be a most skilful strategist, but brilliant strategy alone is not sufficient to

\* Clausewitz, "On War."

ensure success in war, for the ultimate victory is dependent upon many varying factors, such as the moral, the fighting, staying and enduring powers of the men during battle, their discipline and training, the efficiency in tactics of all ranks, from the commanding general to the lowest grade, the arrangements made for the prompt supply of warlike stores, and of food ; while even under the most favourable conditions any untoward accident may upset the best combinations. The skill of the tactician, too, must equal that of the strategist, for inferiority in tactics which brings about defeat in battle (on the successful or unsuccessful result of which all final issues depend) may negative all the positive advantages which may be expected as a consequence of superiority in strategy. With a knowledge of strategy, therefore, must be combined a knowledge of the other branches of the science of war. For all are of importance ; a knowledge of any one branch of the art of war is not sufficient for him who aspires to be a successful leader of armies in the field.

*The object of every strategic manœuvre is the application of superior force at the decisive point—and superior force, as will be pointed out hereafter, does not necessarily mean superior numbers. To bring superior force to bear on the decisive strategic objective, whether that objective be the enemy's army in the field, or the line of communications of that army, or some important decisive point or area, and to inflict on an adversary the greatest possible strategic injury with the least possible harm to oneself, are the sole end and aim of every strategic movement.*

### The Principles of Strategic Manœuvre.

The principles of tactics have had to be modified from time to time, and even radically changed ; "but the old foundations of strategy so far remain, as though laid upon a rock."\* What, then, are the principles governing the movements by which an army may place itself in such a favourable position that a successful result may reasonably be expected to ensue, when actual force is applied, and when the skill of the tactician equals that of the strategist ? What are those movements by means of which skilful leaders have, on occasions, forced their enemy to surrender, without the necessity of actual contact of arms ? Are these principles of strategic manœuvre many or few, and are they complicated or simple ?

The principles are few and simple, but there are ever-changing influences and disturbing conditions, all varying in different degrees, and many impossible to foresee and therefore to provide against. It is these outside influences and disturbing

\* Mahan, "The Influence of Sea Power upon History." The remark is applied to naval strategy, but it is equally true of military strategy.

conditions which change strategy from a simple branch of the art of war to one of the most difficult.

All strategic manœuvres may be classified under one or other of five forms or principles. These are :—

- I. Strokes at an enemy's line of communications.
- II. Compelling an enemy to "form front to flank."
- III. Movements defined as "*Interior versus exterior lines.*"
- IV. Penetration between the separated parts of an enemy's strategic front.
- V. The direct advance on the objective.

As the movements of two opposing forces immediately prior to and during actual contact are called the "tactics" of a battle, so the five principles of strategic manœuvre above enumerated may be called the "Tactics of Strategy."

These principles of strategic manœuvre are generally explained in the text which immediately follows, and are roughly illustrated in Plate I., Figures 1, to 5. Of the succeeding chapters (II. to VI.), each is devoted to the further explanation in detail of the particular principle involved, which is again illustrated by one or more British campaigns, the main movements of which have followed and have been conducted according to the principle of the strategic manœuvre under discussion. Thus the object of each movement will be made clearer, and the underlying intention and purpose of each step taken will be more evident. If the results have been successful, it will be seen how and by what means success has been attained. If the results have been failure—and the campaigns quoted are purposely not all successful ones with respect to the particular principle under discussion—the causes of failure will be explained.

#### The Five Forms or Principles of Strategic Manœuvre Explained.

**Principle I. Stroke at Enemy's Line of Communications.** (Plate I., Fig. 1.)—Blue is advancing from A, its base, and has arrived at B on its march towards C, its objective.

If Red from either flank x or y advances on any point, D, between B and A, Red is making a stroke at, and threatens Blue's line of communications. Should Red succeed in placing himself at D, he has merely followed his threat to its logical conclusion and has interposed between Blue at B and Blue's base at A.

**Principle II. Compelling an Enemy to "Form Front to Flank."** (Plate I., Fig. 2.)—The Blue army from its base at A has arrived at B on the march to C, its objective.

If the Red army places itself at D on the flank of Blue's columns on the march towards C, or on the flank of Blue's

columns deployed into line, Blue cannot well continue towards C without risking and laying open his lines of communication to an attack from Red. To meet the threatened attack Blue forms line towards the threatened flank. The line of Blue's army is then in prolongation of K L, on F E, or parallel to M N, to its line of communications.

This movement in strategy is termed "forming front to flank."

*Principle III. Interior versus Exterior Lines.* (Plate I., Fig. 3, *a* and *b\**)—"That force of which the components act from a common centre outwards, keeping in touch as regards all its parts, every detaining part being able at all times to fall back on the centre, is said to act 'on interior lines.' †

"The forces whose parts move from the circumference along the radii of a circle towards the centre, in such a fashion that if any part be beaten it is driven not towards but away from the other part, is said to act 'on exterior lines.' †

The above definitions generally explain the principles of strategy included under this heading, in the case when one force is acting from a common centre or base, against separate and distinct forces acting from a common or divergent base.

Fig. 3, *a*, illustrating the simplest case that can arise, may serve to fix the meaning. "Suppose Red, an army occupying the position A in the centre of a circle, of which B, C, D is part of the circumference. Blue, an army whose fractions are at B, C, D. Suppose the radius of the circle and the distances B C, C D to be all equal. Now, if Red marches against Blue's centre army at C no advantage is gained, as the two extreme armies of Blue can arrive at C as soon as Red, and both armies are united at C at the same time. But if Red marches from A on either B or D, A will arrive at either of those points united in a time in which P is able to unite only two of the fractions of his army at the same point. A has then moved on 'interior' lines." †

But there must be added the case in which the armies of two adversaries are both divided into two or more component parts, and in which each part is acting from divergent bases.

In this event, which often occurs, that army which can in a given time unite its component parts, before the separated fractions of its adversary can unite an equal or superior force, is also on "interior lines" as compared with the army of its adversary.

Fig. 3, *b*. Two separated fractions, A and B, of a Red army are acting from divergent bases, *a* and *b*.

In like manner two separated fractions of a Blue army are acting from divergent bases, *c* and *d*. Red is on interior lines compared with Blue, for Red can more quickly unite his forces than Blue, and is in a position to fall on one of the separated

\* MacDougall, "Theory of War." † Dr. Maguire, "Military Geography."

‡ MacDougall, "Theory of War."

parts, c or d, of the Blue army, before the other could arrive to its assistance.

*Principle IV. Penetrating Between the Divided Parts of an Enemy's Strategic Front.* (Plate I., Fig. 4.)—The Blue army, to make use of the three parallel roads *x*, *y*, *z*, has been divided into three forces, *A*, *B*, *C*. The advantages of this division of force are a more rapid rate of marching and greater conveniences for supply.

The Red army *M*, *N*, marches to engage Blue. *M* and *N* (Red) penetrate between *A* and *B* (Blue). Part of *M* acts as a containing force against *A*, while remainder of *M* and all *N* fall on *B*, and defeat *B* before *C* can reach *B* in the battle.

*Principle V. The Direct Advance on the Objective.* (Plate I., Fig. 5.)—If the Blue army from *A*, its base, moves straight on *B*, its objective, the Blue army is making a simple direct advance on its objective.

Conversely, if the Red army interposes between *B*, Blue's objective, and the head of Blue's column, or columns, of advance, Red is making a simple direct defence.

The direct advance is scarcely recognised as a principle of strategy by either foreign or British writers.\* It is, however, essentially the first and most common form of British strategy, and has been employed by British generals over and over again, especially in campaigns against semi-civilised and savage nations, with invariable and most complete success.

*Principle I.* Of the five principles of strategic manœuvre enumerated, that of a stroke at the line of communications of an enemy is placed first in order, as the "line of communications, being the link which binds the army in the field with its base of operations, is naturally indicated as the proper objective, if an adequate stroke can be delivered."†

*Principle II.*, "compelling an enemy to form front to flank," is in reality an indirect stroke at a line of communications, for the ulterior objective, when this principle is applied, is to drive the antagonist off and away from his line of communications. As so many campaigns have been fought out according to this principle, it has, in order not to unduly confuse the reader, been treated as a separate and distinct principle of strategic manœuvre.

*Principles III. and IV.* are in many respects analogous. Once the strategic front of an army is broken (Principle IV.) the succeeding movements are as a rule those of "interior *versus* exterior" lines (Principle III.). For the army which has broken

\* Neither Hamley, in his "Operations of War," nor Colonel James, in his "Modern Strategy," admits that the direct advance is "strategy." But as to this point, the reader is referred to Chapter VI., which deals in detail with this particular principle.

† Mahan, "The Influence of Sea Power upon History."

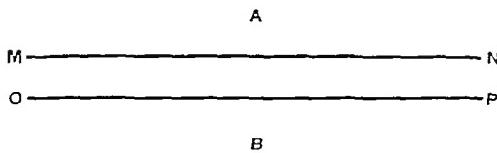
through the strategic front of its adversary will occupy a central position with regard to the separated forces of the enemy. To prevent those forces again combining will be its principal object. This combination it will endeavour to prevent by means of a containing force which will hold up or pursue one separated fraction, while with the remainder it will fall on the other separated fraction.

To break through the strategic front of an enemy may then be said to be but a preliminary, in some instances, to the application of "Interior *versus* Exterior" lines.

The distinction between Principles IV. and V. lies in the fact that, if one belligerent breaks through his opponent's extended front before that opponent can concentrate to oppose him, he has applied Principle IV. Should, however, the opponent concentrate to oppose him before the blow falls, that is before penetration takes place, and should the belligerent who originally intended to apply Principle IV. then persist in a direct attack, that is, does not apply Principles I., II., III., then the strategic manœuvre is not "Penetration" (Principle IV.) but is the "direct advance" (Principle V.), the immediate objective being the opponent's Field Army. It being understood, of course, in this case, that the place of concentration of the opponent is not to a flank, in which case to attack would probably compel both adversaries to "form front to flank."

The following figure will serve to make this statement clearer:—

Two armies (A and B) are extended on the strategic fronts (M N, O P).



If B on the strategic front O P can break through the strategic front of his adversary A, at any point between M N, then B has penetrated A's front (Principle IV.).

But if A can concentrate his forces spread out on the line M N, and disposes them at a point on that line facing O P which B has selected to pierce, before B attacks, and if B should then attack A direct at that point, then B is making a direct advance on his immediate objective, which in this case would be A's field army (Principle V.).

If the operations of all wars, ancient and modern, be attentively studied and analysed, it will be discovered that every strategical manœuvre ever made falls under one or other, or a combination, of the five principles enumerated. Most readers

will already know that to strike at an adversary's line of communications while preserving one's own is sound strategy ; they will already be aware of the fact that to bring a preponderance of force to bear on a decisive point, or at the actual point of contact, is highly desirable. But as to the manner and means by which either of these happy results is to be attained, they may be ignorant. For instance, if questioned as to how one army, inferior in numbers, is to bring superior numbers to bear against the adversary, what answer will or can they give ? If further asked to quote in outline any one campaign, British or foreign, with reference to the particular principle of strategic manœuvre employed to bring about either of the above strategical results, they may be quite at a loss for a reply. If they should be so happily circumstanced as to be able to respond, the example quoted will, in nine cases out of ten, be a foreign, and not a British, campaign.

**Though the Movements of Strategy are limited to one, or to a combination of Five Principles of Manœuvre, Strategy is not on that account either simple or easy.**

Because all strategic manœuvres fall under one or other of the five principles above defined and illustrated, the student of this branch of the operations of war must not on that account entertain for a moment the thought that, having grasped the idea, he now understands strategy, that the art is easy, and that all a leader of armies has to do is to determine which of the principles he intends to apply, and that then the strategic question is settled. For this is by no means the case. In chess, for instance, a player may know the movements of the king, queen, bishops, and other units of the game, he may further have the various openings at his fingers' ends, but he will not necessarily therefore be a good chess player. He may soon find his proposed combinations thwarted and upset by the counter-moves of his adversary. So too in strategy. The whole operations of a commander, arrived at after much anxious consideration and after an earnest study of all possible combinations, may at one stroke be ruined by a sudden and unexpected counter-move of his adversary.

Continuing the comparison between chess and strategy, the units of chess are inanimate objects, the movements of which are governed by the laws of the game, but may otherwise be directed hither and thither at the absolute will and pleasure of the player. But the units of strategy are masses of men-armies, and these armies are again divided and subdivided into Army Corps, Divisions, and Brigades, and each of these divisions and subdivisions is again composed of the various branches of the service which make up an army—the Engineers, the Cavalry, the



Fig. 1.

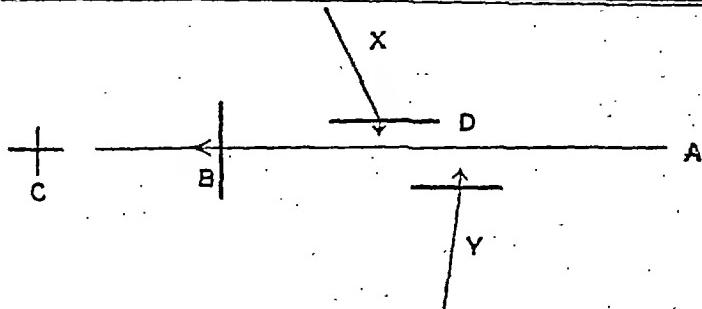


Fig. 2.

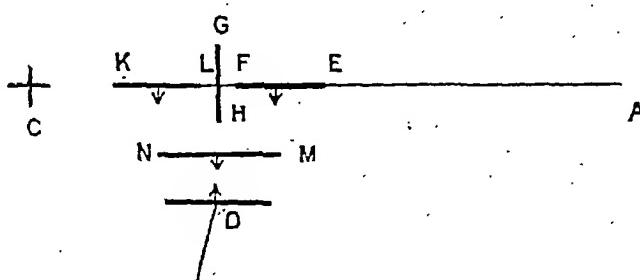
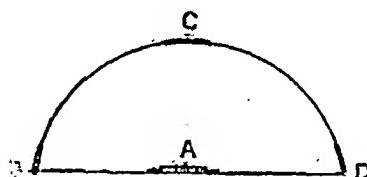


Fig. 3.

(a)



(b)

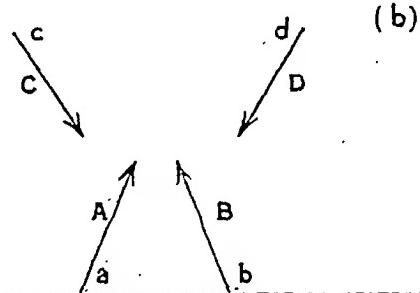


Fig. 4.

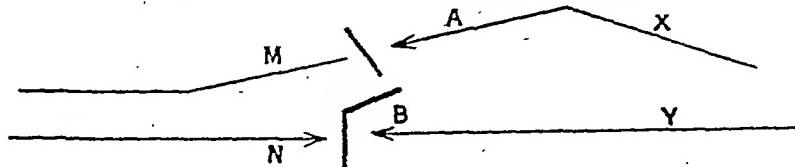
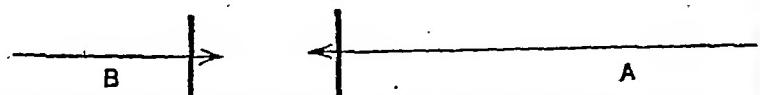


Fig. 5.



Artillery, Infantry, Medical and Veterinary Corps, Supply and Transport Corps. All these, like the units of chess, have certain known and generally understood limitations and restrictions as to movement, but the units of an army are animate beings, and cannot therefore, unlike the units of chess, be directed hither and thither at the will of the commander, for their movements are governed by the powers of endurance of the men who march, and by the organisation which, keeping them fed, clothed, and supplied with the necessary munitions of war, facilitates their operations.

There are other decisive factors also which have to be considered, such as the passions and feelings of the men, their fighting qualities, their training for war, their intelligence, their arms and equipment, the resources of the State which keeps the army in the field, and the enthusiasm and determination of the nation as a whole with respect to the particular campaign engaged in.

Moreover, the surface of the chessboard is uniform, flat, and divided into equal squares, and the movement of each player is known at once to his opponent. But the surface of the earth upon which operations of war are conducted is not flat and uniform, but, on the contrary, is seamed and crossed by mountains and rivers, and is traversed in all directions by roads and railways, each of which hinders or aids all strategic movements to a degree varying with its particular nature and direction. An army cannot jump an unfordable river as the knight skips over a pawn or leaps a castle. Neither are the movements of the opposing forces known at once and definitely to the respective commanders, but all up to a certain point is uncertainty.

Readiness for war, the proper distribution of troops, unity of direction, correct choice of the objective, proper selection of the base and of the lines leading to the objective, everything pertaining to the supplies of an army in the field—these are each and all factors which affect the strategic plan in contemplation.

"But, although at first sight the theory is sufficiently clear, the great variety of circumstances which must be taken into consideration, and the momentary alterations these present, are causes that of all arts it is the most complicated and uncertain in application."\*

"Thus, then, in strategy everything is very simple, but not on that account very easy. Once it is determined, from the relations of the State, what should and may be done by war, then the way to it is easy to find; but to follow that way straightforward—to carry out the plan without being obliged to deviate from it a thousand times, by a thousand varying influences—that requires, besides great strength of character,

great clearness and steadiness of mind ; and out of a thousand men who are remarkable, some for mind, others for penetration, others again for boldness or strength of will, perhaps not one will combine in himself all those qualities which are required to raise a man above mediocrity in the career of a general.”\*

“ I don’t doubt their impatience in England ; but I don’t think they ever form in England an accurate estimate of the difficulties attending any military enterprise which they undertake.”†

### The Various Conditions and Influences which affect Strategy.

The various conditions and influences previously referred to, which affect strategy, may be divided into two classes.

Class I.—Those which are known beforehand, and therefore can be calculated in advance.

Class II.—Those which are changing and cannot therefore be reckoned with. Conditions which may suddenly arise, or may cease to have effect, and which therefore interfere with the strategic plan in contemplation or in progress.

Under Class I. may be included :—

1. Geographical features of the theatre of war. General direction and nature of the mountain barriers and rivers in the theatre of operations. Obstacles in general, both natural and artificial.

2. Configuration of bases.

3. Configuration of frontiers.

4. Climatic conditions.

5. Preparations and readiness for war when war is declared.

Under Class II. may be included :—

1. Continuity of policy. Political influences, external or internal, or both combined.

2. Friendliness, neutrality, or enmity of foreign Powers.

3. Capabilities of the superior and subordinate leaders to whom are entrusted the conduct of the campaign.

There remain influences which affect strategy after active operations have commenced, and while a preconceived plan is being developed. Amongst the principal of these may be mentioned :

4. Action taken by foreign Powers after the outbreak of hostilities. A foreign Power may change its attitude from one of neutrality to one of hostility, and by actively or passively interfering upset all previously formed plans. Or an ally may withdraw from an active alliance and share in the campaign to an attitude of neutrality, remaining content to look on as a mere spectator.

\* Clausewitz, “On War.”

† Sir Arthur Wellesley, “Supplementary Despatches.”

5. Mistakes and errors of judgment on the part of subordinate leaders in carrying out their instructions; failure to grasp the situation of the moment; indecision in action on an unexpected and sudden emergency.

6. Delay in the receipt of important orders, or incorrect interpretation of orders received, both of which factors may affect the operations in a very serious degree.

7. The food supplies available in the theatre of operations.

8. Intelligence in war.

9. Last, but not least, the element of "Luck."

Since so many of the influences enumerated are neither permanent nor can be previously determined or estimated for, but change from time to time, it follows that beyond the preliminary and opening phases of a campaign nothing can really be definitely settled beforehand. For what under certain conditions would be the best plan, would obviously under other conditions be faulty. For these reasons, the preconceived strategy of a campaign cannot be drawn up on hard and fast lines; a scheme cannot be previously determined upon which is never to be departed from. The plan must be elastic, and the leader must be prepared for the unexpected.

To take a simple and general example. The plan has to be drawn up of a campaign to be undertaken in the dry season of a tropical climate, the theatre of operations being crossed by one or more rivers. In dry seasons, in tropical climates, the water in the rivers is low—there may even be no water at all. The passage of the rivers will consequently present little or no difficulty. But in the rainy season the river beds become filled with torrents which may be quite impassable. Therefore what may be the best line of advance in the dry, may in the wet or rainy season be quite unsuitable. Thus the seasons of the year in which active operations are to be undertaken may decide the strategy of a campaign. In one of the campaigns quoted hereafter, it will be seen how a storm in the mountains caused the water in a river to rise to such an extent that a British force camped for the night on the near bank when the water was low, was unable next morning to cross to the far side, thus delaying for several days a concentration of two separate British forces, a delay which in its turn led to one of the greatest disasters our arms have encountered in the Indian Peninsula.\*

These outside and varying influences which form so decisive a factor in the correct adoption of a strategic plan, before the actual operations of war commence, and those which have effect while active operations are in progress, are treated of in Part II.

\* See Chapter V., p. 86, "Invasion of the Carnatic by Hyder Ali."

of this work, and may therefore, for the present, be dismissed. Since, however, the majority of these influences affect the strategy of proposed operations while the plan of campaign is being drawn up and decided upon, it became a nice question for decision whether they should not more properly be first investigated and examined, the principles of strategic manœuvre to follow in the steps and on the track of such inquiry. The decision eventually arrived at, after careful consideration of the two methods open to adoption, lay in favour of the scheme now pursued. And for this reason. The reader, if he will only persevere so far as to follow Part I., will, at any rate, have acquired a perception of, and a certain familiarity with, the principles of strategic manœuvre, though he may be unacquainted with the influences which may, and do, affect the application of such principles.

If these influences now treated under Part II. had been included under Part I., and if the reader, having progressed so far, had found his patience exhausted, or his determination to continue his study had faltered or failed him altogether, he would have acquired, certainly, a knowledge of the influences which have a decisive effect on the principles of strategic manœuvre, but would have learnt nothing as to the principles themselves.

#### Offensive and Defensive Strategy.

War is offensive or defensive. Defensive war may be of two kinds—the defensive-offensive, or the pure defensive. Of these three forms of war, Clausewitz declares that that of the defensive-offensive is the strongest, while all authorities on strategy are agreed that the pure defensive is the weakest.

"From a moral and political point of view, the offensive is nearly always advantageous; it carries the war upon foreign soil, saves the assailant's country from devastation, increases his resources and diminishes those of the enemy, elevates the moral of his army while depressing that of the adversary, and gives to the offender the immense advantage attached to the initiative." \*

On the other hand, "the advantages of defensive war comprise intimate knowledge of the country and the easy turning to account of such initiatory advantages as it may offer—the support of the fortresses, and other artificial defences of the country. The support afforded by the population to the defending army, resulting in better information as to the enemy, and popular resistance to his progress. The easy bringing up of supplies and reinforcements, while the assailant is compelled to weaken himself by guarding his communications." \*

The reasons which govern the choice as to whether a cam-

\* Tovey and Maguire, "The Elements of Strategy."

paign shall be offensive, defensive-offensive, or the pure defensive are governed by various considerations, chief of which may be mentioned :—

1. Political considerations.
2. Geographical considerations.
3. Inferior state of preparation.
4. Inferiority in resources.

As examples, may be quoted :—

1. *Political Considerations.*—The strategy of many British campaigns is often at their inception defensive in character, the defensive being necessary for the sake of eliminating any possible idea that the war was of Britain's seeking. Thus, in the first Sikh campaign (see hereafter) the preliminary preparations for war adopted were defensive in character, in order to prove to the Sikh Durbar and nation that no invasion of their country was contemplated by the Indian Government. The Sikh nation declared and forced on war by the act of crossing the River Sutlej. The Sikh armies were defeated in the opening battles of the campaign, and driven across the Sutlej, when the British forces in their turn crossed the river and advanced on Lahore.

2. *Geographical Considerations.*—These considerations peculiarly apply to an insular Power such as Great Britain, where offensive action is essential to reach the enemy at all. Hence the extreme importance to the British Empire of decided superiority at sea, this superiority being absolutely necessary to protect the sea lines of communications, upon the safety and security of which the whole campaign depends.

3. *Inferior State of Preparation.*—The South African Campaign is an instance. On account of political considerations, both external and internal, in spite of the warning of military authorities that the preparations for a campaign were inadequate and incomplete, the outbreak of hostilities found Britain unprepared. The first phase of this campaign had therefore to be limited to the pure defensive only, the protection of Cape Colony and Natal against the invading forces of the Transvaal and Orange Free States being all that it was possible to undertake. As our resources in Africa increased, and reinforcements and supplies were gradually landed, the first—the defensive—phase of the war passed from the pure defensive to that of a defensive-offensive character, which in turn was succeeded by the offensive.

4. *Inferiority in Resources.*—This consideration rarely applies to the British Empire. The actual resources available on the spot, at the moment when war is declared, may be, and often have been, quite inadequate, as already cited in the case of the South African Campaign, but owing to her vast resources, her wealth and command of the sea, inferiority of resources is a

disadvantage which Great Britain fortunately has always had it in her power to cancel either sooner or later.

### Strategical and Tactical Movements Compared.

If the principles of *tactical movements* prior to and during battle be analysed, it will be observed that they all may be classified under one or other, or a combination, of the same five headings as those of strategy.

1. All flanking and turning movements in tactics, made with the object of striking an enemy's battle flank, or gaining his rear, are merely the principles of strategy classified as "compelling an enemy to form front to flank," or "as strokes at an enemy's line of communications."

2. In tactics, "*Interior versus Exterior*" lines correspond exactly to the same principle of strategy.

3. In tactics, if the enemy, anticipating a flank attack, should weaken the centre of his line of battle front to strengthen his flank or flanks, or if he take up a line too extended for the number of his troops to occupy, and if in either case not his flank but his centre be attacked and pierced, the principle corresponds to that principle of strategic manœuvre defined as "penetrating between the separated parts of an enemy's strategic front."

4. A tactical frontal attack is nothing more nor less than the "direct advance" of strategy.

If students of tactics would but bear these five principles of movement in mind, they would probably find the solution of tactical schemes, and the correct writing of a tactical appreciation, far easier and simpler than they have done hitherto. And he who seeks the solution of a tactical problem will soon discover for himself the fact that a certain plan, if only it could be carried out, would be highly desirable; but, unfortunately, the nature and character of the ground on which the impending battle is to be fought interferes with, or forbids, its execution. The presence or absence of a stream, a lake, a hill, a shelter trench, or breast-work, is a tactical obstacle, natural or artificial, which influences tactics in an exactly similar manner, and in the same degree, as mountain barriers, rivers, deserts, and great fortresses influence strategic manœuvres.

In fact, though the statement may be contradicted, tactical movements preparatory to a battle are neither more nor less than strategic manœuvres in miniature. If, therefore, the reader will attentively study what is about to be set forth in the subsequent chapters with regard to strategic manœuvres, and will apply exactly the same principles to tactical movements, it will follow that whatever knowledge of strategy he may acquire, by so much also will he gain in his knowledge of tactics. In

considering a tactical situation, in deciding what he intends to do, and how he proposes to act, to carry out and complete that intention, he will carefully study the *terrain* over which his tactical movements are about to take place, he will note the direction and nature of the tactical *natural* obstacles which traverse the ground, he will take into due consideration the tactical *artificial* obstacles constructed on the area of his tactical operations. Then, whatever line of action he decides to pursue in order to accomplish his end, it will be one or other, or a combination, of five tactical movements, which will correspond exactly to the five movements of strategy.

## CHAPTER II.

### STROKES AT AN ENEMY'S LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS.

Necessity of a Line of Communications—Sensitiveness of Lines of Communications—Considerations which affect their Safety and Security—Example of a Successful and an Unsuccessful Stroke against an Enemy's Lines of Communications—Campaign of Vitoria, 1813—Campaign of Corunna, 1808-9—Why Moore Failed and Wellington Succeeded—Strong and Weak Lines of Communications—Value of Rapid and Safe Communications towards a Threatened Area of Operations—Choice of a Line of Operations—First Invasion of Mysore, 1790—Second Invasion of Mysore, 1791—Lines of Communications in Mountain Warfare—A Raid against a Line of Communications not a Strategic Stroke—Changing a Line of Communications—Abandoning a Line of Communications—Afghan War: Second Phase—From Kandahar to Kabul (1880)—Sir Frederick Roberts's March, Kabul to Kandahar (1880).

#### Necessity of a Line of Communications.

In former times, up to the invention and introduction of firearms, so long as the resources of the country in which they happened to be operating furnished armies with sufficient food supplies, the armies were independent of lines of communications. For the soldier armed with the sling, bow and arrow, or lance and sword, made his weapons last throughout a series of campaigns, replenishing his simple needs, if any, in the matter of armament from the weapons of his enemies defeated in battle, or from the resources of towns which, when taken, he mercilessly sacked and pillaged.

But even in ancient times countries became devastated, especially in the event of continuous warfare in any one district or area. When this happened, to the leader of an army operating in an enemy's country there remained three alternatives. He had either to move to some new district, which might or might not be possible, and might or might not fit in with the object he had in view; or he had to reduce his army to a size proportionate to such supplies as he could obtain on the spot; but this diminution of his forces was risky, especially if operating in an enemy's country, for sources of supply might be open to the opponent which were not available to his own army, so that the enemy might still maintain his forces at their original strength, and thus be superior in numbers;



Fig. 1.

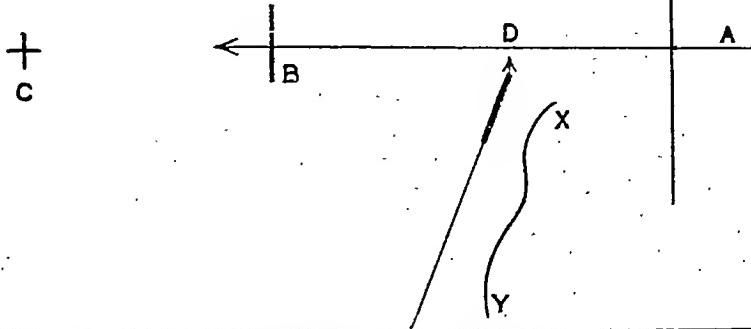


Fig. 2.

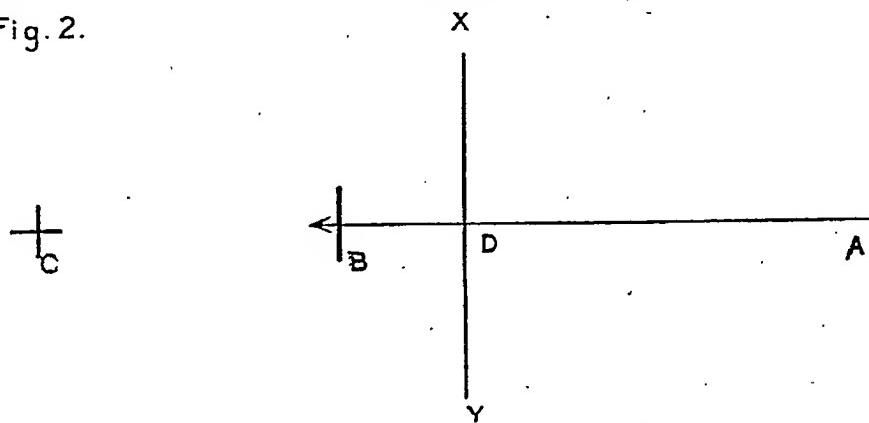
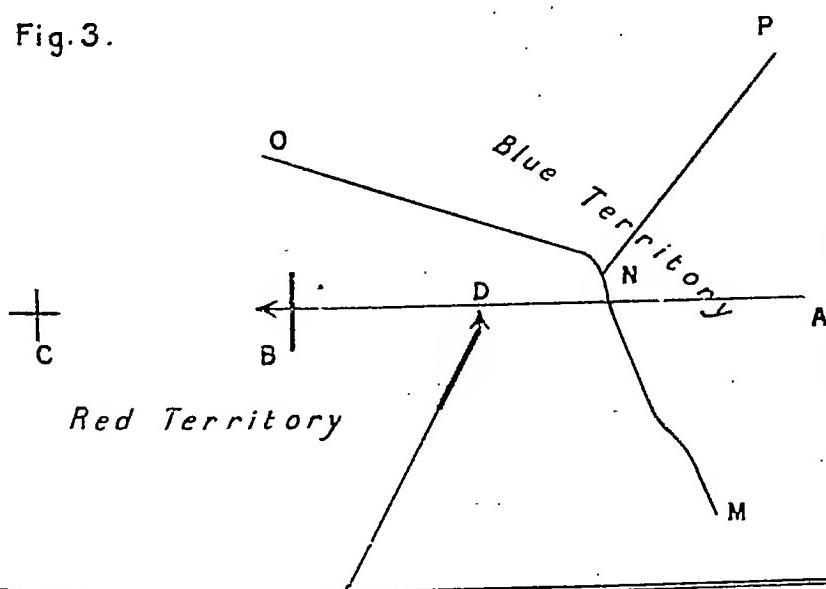


Fig. 3.



STROKES AT AN ENEMY'S LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS.

and victory, when the armament, drill, and discipline of two belligerents are equal, will incline to the side of superior numbers. There remained a third alternative, namely to maintain his army at its original strength, and supply it with food from the home country. This at once involved the establishment of a line of communications along which food supplies could be despatched from the home country to the army in the field. In many cases, then, under certain conditions, even in wars of the most ancient times, a line or lines of communications were almost as much a necessity as, it will be shown, they now are.

But with the introduction of firearms, armies began to be always dependent upon their lines of communications, not necessarily for purposes of food supply, but to replenish an ever decreasing supply of ammunition. Food might or might not be obtained locally, but a reliable supply of powder and shot never. The more firearms improved, the more essential it became rapidly and safely to keep the army in the field supplied with warlike stores. As time went on, more humane methods of conducting war arose. The practice of killing off prisoners, of the indiscriminate slaughter of women and children, and of leaving the wounded and sick to fend for themselves, gradually ceased, until eventually a period was reached when, in all wars between nations with any pretence to rank as civilised Powers, the wounded and sick, of foes as well as friends, received equal attention from both belligerents. And even this humane method of conducting war has been lately surpassed by Britain in the campaign against the two Republics of South Africa. The women and children of the vanquished, even whilst active operations were still in progress, were provided for at the conquerors' expense, while their husbands, sons, and brothers were in open revolt; and these, with no feeling of shame at the course they were pursuing, actually sent their womenfolk to be fed, clothed, and protected by their enemy. All this involved the despatch to the seat of war of additional supplies of food, medicines, medical and other creature comforts, thus heavily adding to the expenses of the war, and almost straining the resources of the great supply departments to, at times, breaking point.

#### Sensitiveness of Lines of Communications.

To modern civilised armies acting at a distance greater than one day's march from their base of operations, lines of communications are, as has been shown, an absolute necessity. For though a modern army may, for a shorter or longer period of time, exist, as regards supplies of food, on the resources of the country in which it may happen to be, yet there still remains, and always will remain, the necessity of making good deficiencies in munitions of war, the care of the sick and wounded, the

general, refitment of an army, and its recruitment. These can only be obtained from the bases of supply. By means of the line or lines of communications the army in the field is maintained with supplies which have been collected within the base of operations, and despatched from some convenient starting point or points from that base. Hence it follows that any interruption, or even threat of interruption, to the stream of supplies transmitted along the lines of communications must hinder and embarrass the movements of the army operating at their extremity. The more civilised the armies and the larger they are in numbers, the greater are their requirements, and consequently the more dependent do they become on their lines of communications.

It is needless to labour the point as to the importance and sensitiveness of the lines of communications, for every officer or private who has ever taken a part even in peaceful manœuvres in his own country, where everything so far as possible is foreseen and provided for, is quite alive to the inconvenience and discomfort to which he is put if the cart or mule which carries his own particular kit, or his supplies and food, breaks down on the road, and fails to arrive in camp. His wants have to be met by begging or borrowing from more fortunate comrades. If the non-arrival of his particular necessities be so inconvenient to the individual concerned during peace manœuvres, what if, in war, supplies not merely of food, but also of warlike stores for a whole army, be interrupted not only for a day, but for a considerable period of time? A feeling at once pervades all ranks that the opponent, having succeeded in fastening on their line of communications, and thereby stopping their supplies, is very advantageously situated. Moreover, the fact that the line of communications is in addition often the line of retreat should the army be defeated, renders its protection doubly important, and further limits the freedom of action in manœuvre of the army, which may be absolutely dependent upon the line.

"While distant spectators imagine him (the general) to be intent only on striking or parrying a blow, he probably directs a hundred glances, a hundred anxious thoughts, to the communications in his rear for one that he bestows on his adversary's front. Perhaps no situation is more pitiable than that of a commander who has allowed an enemy to sever his communications. He sees the end of his resources at hand, but not the means to replenish them. Is he to spread his troops to find subsistence for themselves? How, then, shall they be assembled to meet the enemy? Shall he combine them for a desperate attack? How, if that attack fails, are they to be fed? He will then have no alternative but to

make the best terms he can, or see his army dissolve like snow."\*

### Considerations which affect the Safety and Security of Lines of Communications.

But this sensitiveness, as well as the dependence for supplies on the line of communications, is one of degree, dependent upon whether the army in the field is carrying on war in its own or allied territory, or in an enemy's country.

If an army is operating in its own territory it is naturally not so tied and limited to its line of communications. In case of need the line or lines can be changed, for as the army is operating in its own country, every assistance may be expected from the inhabitants of the country, supplies will be voluntarily furnished by the people, and the risk of interruption, whether by rail, river, or road, is, of course, greatly diminished.

On the contrary, in a foreign or in an enemy's country no assistance can be expected from the inhabitants. The lines of communications are liable to constant interruption, their protection has to be provided for, which means the employment of men for this purpose who would otherwise be more advantageously engaged at the actual front: the lines are more fixed, the army is more restricted to its line or lines, and those lines are very sensitive to attack or threat of attack.

But whether operating in friendly territory or in that of an enemy, the sensitiveness of the line of communications and the dependence to be placed on it by an army in the field are governed by certain considerations, to which it is desirable that particular attention should be directed. These are:—

1. Length of the lines.
2. Number of the lines.

3. General direction (*a*) with regard to the base from which they start, and the strategic front where they end: (*b*) with regard to the natural features of the theatre of operations.

1. *Length*.—The shorter the lines of communications the better, as a rule, for they are then easier to protect and cover, either directly or indirectly; they do not require so many men to defend, and present fewer opportunities of attack to the enemy.

2. *Number*.—If an army can operate equally well by one line, and that line offers equal chances of strategic success, then the single line is preferable to double or more lines for the same reasons as are included under length of lines. The advantage of double or more lines lies in the fact that if one line is lost, and

\* Hamley, "Operations of War."

has to be abandoned, there remain the alternative lines on which to fall back.

A single line of communications may, and often does, include two or more parallel lines connecting the army in the field with its base, and provided these lines are within marching and supporting distance of each other, they fall under the definition of single line of communications.

By "double" or more lines of communications are meant lines which are not within marching and supporting distance of each other, whether operating from the same or divergent bases, and whether connecting one or two armies in the field.

For instance, an army in northern Afghanistan might be maintained by the line of the Khyber and the line of the Kurram Valley, Paiwar Kotal, and Shutar Gardun Pass. Such an army would be operating from the same base, the Punjab, though from two points in that base, namely, Peshawar and Kohat. The lines of communications would be double, for the line of the former is not within marching or supporting distance of the latter. Again, an army in the Transvaal supplied and maintained in the field by lines from Cape Colony and Natal would be operating by double lines for the same reason, but in this case from divergent bases.

*3. General Direction.*—(a) The more perpendicular the general direction of the line with regard to the strategic front of the army using it, the more difficult it is for an enemy (especially if that enemy be operating by a single line and from a parallel base of operations) to attack the line.

The effect of configuration of bases of operations and frontiers with regard to the strategic front of an army, and the lines of communications connecting the front with the base, is separately dealt with in Part II., Chapters VI. and VII., so may for the present be dismissed, but see Plate II., Fig. 3, which illustrates a simple case.

(b) Natural features such as mountain barriers and rivers,

- i. If parallel to the line, assist in its defence by the protection afforded on that flank on which they happen to lie (see Plate II., Fig. 1);
- ii. If perpendicular to the line, when once the exits are assured, shorten and therefore strengthen the line (see Plate II., Fig. 2).

In Plate II., Fig. 1, an army, Blue, from its base A has arrived at B on its advance to C, its objective.

If the Red army moves on some point D in its own (Red's) territory between B and A, then Blue is in a dangerous position.

His line of communications from B through D to A, his base, is threatened, and if the Red army succeeds in arriving at D, then

Red has interposed between Blue and his base. It is open to Blue to reply from *b* by moving on Red's line, but the situation is not reciprocal. Red, if defeated, is in his own territory and may recover himself; but Blue is in foreign territory, and defeat in this case usually spells ruin.

The situation here presented is the most favourable for making a stroke at an enemy's line of communications, for it will be observed that Red, while advancing against Blue's line of communications, has his own flank secured by the obstacle *x y*.

In Plate II., Fig. 2, the Blue army has advanced from *a*, its base, as far as *b* on its march towards *c*, its objective.

Let the line *x y* represent some natural obstacle, such as a chain of mountains or a river, the issues of which are in the Blue army's possession.

Blue, by holding the issues, has secured his line from any chance of interruption between *b* and *a* by Red. Not only so, but Blue has shortened his line, for he can advance his base to *d*.

Red might try to force the line *x y*, but such movement should not be possible without Blue receiving ample warning, and so having time to concert measures for defence.

The configuration of a base line, or a frontier which is a base line, may affect the line of communications in the same way as mountain barriers or a river.

As before, the Blue army has advanced from *a*, its base, to *b* on its move to *c*, its objective. Plate II., Fig. 3.

If the Red army threatens *d*, it is open to Blue to change his line, and, owing to the configuration of the frontier *m n o*, to retire into his own country, where he may reasonably hope to find security, and where at any rate he will be more secure than if the frontier be shaped as *m n p*.

#### Example of a Successful Stroke against an Enemy's Line of Communications.

CAMPAGN OF VITORIA.—IBERIAN PENINSULA, 1813. (MAP II.)

Liberation of Spain by the British, Portuguese, and Spanish armies under Wellington.

*French Forces*.—The French army had been reduced in numbers, owing to drafts and men in hospital, from 230,000 men to 197,000. Of these, 68,000, including sick, were in Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia under command of Suchet.

10,000 were in Madrid.

The remainder, distributed on the lines of communications from the River Tormes back to Bayonne in France, were divided as follows :

1. The army of Portugal under Reille behind the River Tormes and the River Esla.

2. Part of the army of the south, watching Hill from behind the River Tietar, and the Spaniards from behind the River Tagus.

3. The army of the north under Cafferelli, watching the line of communications generally.

4. The army of the centre under Drouet.

*Allied Forces.*—The first army under Copons in Catalonia, nominally 10,000 men.

The second army under Elio in Murcia, 20,000 men, and the Anglo-Sicilian army under Murray near Alicante, 16,000 men.

The third army under Del Parque in the Sierra Morena, 12,000 men.

The fourth army under Castanos, about 40,000 men.

An army in reserve under Abispal in Andalusia, 15,000.

The Anglo-Portuguese army, 70,000 men, 90 guns.

Grand total, approximately 200,000 men.

The campaign now about to be related is mainly concerned with the last of these armies, the Anglo-Portuguese army, under the immediate command of Wellington.

#### *Position of the Opposing Armies.*

*French Front.*—The French extreme left under Suchet was opposed by the allies at Alicante.

The Centre under Soult, with headquarters at Toledo, and detachments (*a*) near the Sierra Morena watching Del Parque; (*b*) at Talavera to observe Morillo; (*c*) on the River Tietar to observe Hill.

From the River Tietar the French communicated by the Gredos Mountains with Avila, where Foy was posted, partly for food and partly to watch Biejar and the upper Tormes, because the Allies, by possessing the pass of Biejar, might have united north of the mountains and fallen on Madrid.

On Foy's right Reille occupied the line of the Tormes, the Douro, and the Esla.

Behind this line was Caffarelli.

*Allied Front.*—Hill occupied Coria and Placentia, holding Biejar with a detachment, with two divisions in reserve.

The light division were on the River Aqueda.

Portuguese cavalry were in Mon Corva.

British cavalry were in the valley of the Mondego.

Remainder of the Anglo-Portuguese army were cantoned in Portugal.

In these quarters the Anglo-Portuguese army was easily fed owing to improved navigation of the Tagus, the Douro, and the Mondego, and at the same time could quickly and easily be concentrated.

*Courses Open to Wellington.*

The courses open to Wellington in the spring of 1813 were:—

1. To turn the French right by forcing the River Douro and the River Tormes.
2. To advance on Madrid by Avila.
3. To advance on Madrid by the valley of the Tagus.
4. To advance on Madrid by both Avila and the valley of the Tagus. Arrived at Madrid, he could move (a) northwards, (b) upon Saragossa, (c) south-east to co-operate with the Anglo-Sicilian army.

*Objections to Certain of the above plans.*

With regard to 2, 3, and 4, it was not advisable to operate in the central provinces of Spain because (i.) the country was exhausted; (ii.) the lines of supply would be longer and more exposed; (iii.) the army would be farther removed from the sea; (iv.) the Galicians could not so easily co-operate; (v.) the services of the northern Partidas could not so advantageously be employed; (vi.) the ultimate result would be *less decisive than a stroke against the French lines of communications.*

Wellington therefore determined to operate in the north of Spain, for the purpose of turning the French right.

*Why Wellington Operated by his Left.*

On the Lower Douro the French army could be turned by a wide movement across the Upper Tormes, and thence towards the Upper Douro; but though this plan would be advisable, because the army would be kept concentrated, it was inadvisable because—

(a) The line of advance led through a difficult and exhausted country.

(b) The direct aid of the Galicians would be lost.

(c) The French expected an attack along this line.

Hence Wellington resolved to operate by his left. The design was to pass the River Douro on the Portuguese frontier, and Wellington would have done so with his army in mass, but the necessity of keeping his right so far advanced in Spain barred this measure, for a concentration on his left would have exposed the country and disclosed his project. Therefore Wellington adopted the modified plan of ascending with his left the right bank of the Douro, crossing the River Esla, there to unite with the Galicians, while the remainder of the army from the River Agueda should force the River Tormes. That is, Wellington operated by two wings. The right wing, commanded personally by Wellington, operated against the French front, while the left wing, commanded by General Graham, was continually pushed forward, for the double purpose of outflanking that front and of

*menacing the line of communications of the French armies with France.*

### *Movements.*

Wellington was ready to take the field in April, but was unable to concentrate before the green forage was fit for use; the execution of his plan on this account, and owing to other unforeseen difficulties which arose, was deferred till the latter end of May.

*May 12th.*—The army in reserve in Andalusia extended from Seville to the bridge at Almaraz so as to threaten Madrid.

*May 20th.*—Hill moved to Biejar, and Del Parque from the Sierra Morena into La Mancha.

*May 22nd.*—Graham's movement in the Tras os Montes being well advanced, the right wing of the allied army split up into two divisions: one under Hill moved from Biejar to Alla de Tormes, the other under Wellington to Salamanca.

*May 23rd.*—Wellington's headquarters at Ciudad Rodrigo.

*May 24th.*—A French detachment at Ledesma was withdrawn from that place.

The French still remained in ignorance of Graham's turning movement.

*May 26th.*—The heads of the allied columns of the right wing appeared on all roads leading to the River Tormes, where Villatte awaited their approach above the ford of Santa Marta. Attacked in front, and turned at the ford, Villatte retreated, but was overtaken before he could gain the defiles of Aldea Lengua; nevertheless, the French effected the passage of the defile, and as they were joined at Babila Fuenta by fresh troops from Alba, the pursuit by the allied army was abandoned.

*May 27th and 28th.*—The left wing of the allies approached Zamora, the right wing Toro.

*May 29th.*—Wellington, disquieted about his combination on the River Esla, started to join the left wing, crossing the River Douro at Miranda.

*May 30th.*—Wellington personally joined Graham at Carvajales.

*May 31st.*—Graham crossed the River Esla.

*June 1st.*—The Allies entered Zamora, which was evacuated by the French, who, destroying the bridge, retreated on Toro. The French again fell back, also destroying the bridge at Toro. A cavalry rearguard action took place, in which the French cavalry, being broken, retired and rallied on their infantry.

The River Douro being fordable, the junction of the two wings of the allied army was now secured.

*June 3rd.*—The left wing halted to permit the Galicians to come into line and close up the rear.

The right wing crossed the River Douro at Toro.

*June 4th.*—The allied army to Valladolid.

The French columns commenced to concentrate.

*June 7th.*—The Allies crossed the River Carrion and reached and crossed the Upper Pisuerga.

*June 8th, 9th, 10th.*—King Joseph, having now concentrated 55,000 French troops, hoped to be in a position to give battle behind the line of the Pisuerga, but upon receiving a report from Jourdain that Burgos was untenable, he resolved to retreat behind the River Ebro.

*June 12th.*—The left wing halted.

The right wing advanced along the main road to Burgos. The French, under Reille, fought a detaining action behind the River Hormoza. During the night, the French abandoned Burgos, and retreated along the high road by Briviesca to Pancorbo.

*June 14th.*—Graham, with the left wing, crossed the River Ebro at Roemunde and St. Martin.

*June 15th.*—Hill passed the Ebro at Puente Arenas.

The allied army was now placed between the sources of the Ebro and the Reynosa Mountains, which were occupied by Spanish guerillas.

The French were cut off from the sea coast, the towns and ports on which were evacuated by them with the exception of Bilbao and Santona.

The British army transferred its base from Portugal to ports on the north coast of Spain.

*June 16th.*—King Joseph's line now roughly extended from Aro on his left through Miranda to Pancorbo in the centre, thence to Frias on the right, facing south. From Frias the line was thrown back almost at right angles, facing west through Espejo and Osma to Orduna, on the road to Bilbao.

Their baggage was in the basin of Vitoria.

Clausel with 14,000 men was on the march by way of Logrono to join Joseph.

It was now open to Wellington to move down the left bank of the Ebro and engage the French wherever met with, but the British general preferred the alternative plan of still pushing forward with his left, *and so to cut in on his adversary's main communications with France.*

*June 17th.*—Joseph, warned by Jourdain as to Wellington's intentions, commenced an undecided movement towards his right to Espejo and Orduna.

*June 18th.*—Reille, in command of the French right, encountered the allied left wing near Osma, and Maucune, called by Reille from Frias to join him at Osma, suddenly came into contact with the light division of the British army. This meeting was unexpected on both sides. Maucune being driven back, the French, under Reille, retired to Salinas de Anara.

On the evening of this day, Reille again fell back on the line of the River Bayas to cover the concentration of the French armies behind the River Zadora, in the basin of Vitoria.

*June 19th.*—The allied army crossed the River Bayas.

Reille fell back behind the River Zadora.

The French armies were concentrated behind the Zadora.

One large convoy was despatched to France.

The right wing of the allied army camped on the River Bayas, the left wing moved to Murguia, cutting off the enemy from Bilbao, and menacing the main communications with France.

*June 20th.*—Wellington halted to permit the rear of his columns, which had been much scattered, to come into line.

*June 21st.*—At daybreak the French managed to despatch a second large convoy to France.

At daybreak, too, Wellington commenced his attack on the French position, which lay facing west behind the River Zadora, while Graham, advancing the Bilbao Road, though stoutly opposed by Reille, turned the right and rear, and eventually succeeded in placing some of his brigades on the great road from Vitoria to Bayonne.\* Wellington successfully crossed the Zadora and gradually pushed the French back into Vitoria itself. By evening the victory was complete, and the French, in the greatest confusion, were in full retreat along the only road now left open to them, that leading from Vitoria on to Pampeluna; and soon an overturned waggon on this road rendered all further passage for wheeled traffic impracticable.

“Never before in modern times had such a prodigious accumulation of military stores and private wealth fallen to the lot of a victorious army. Jourdain’s marshal’s baton, Joseph’s private carriage and sword of State, 150 brass guns, 415 caissons of ammunition, 1,300,000 ball cartridges, 14,000 rounds of ammunition, and 40,000 lbs. of gunpowder constituted the military trophies of a victory where 6,000 also were killed and wounded and 1,000 prisoners taken. It at one blow destroyed the warlike efficiency of the French army, swept them like a whirlwind from the Spanish plains, and made Joseph’s crown fall from his head. No estimate can be formed of the amount of private plunder which was taken on the field, but it exceeded anything witnessed in modern war; for it was not the produce of the sack of a city, or the devastation of a province, but the accumulated plunder of a kingdom during five years, joined to the arrears of pay of the invaders’ host for two, which was now at one fell swoop reft from the spoiler. Independent of private

\* Forces engaged in the battle.—French: 65,000 effective combatants, 150 pieces of cannon. Allied Army: 80,000, with 90 guns. Losses.—French: not exceeding 6,000, including prisoners. Allied Army: 5,176, including wounded and missing.

booty, no less than five millions and a half of dollars in the military chest of the army were taken; and of private wealth the amount was so prodigious that for miles together the pursuers may be almost said to have marched upon gold and silver without stooping to pick it up."\*

*Movements After the Battle.*

After the battle the French armies escaped in two separate directions, Joseph and the troops who fought at Vitoria to Pampeluna, while Foy, advancing with reinforcements to Vitoria, but not in time to take part in the battle, the fugitive garrisons of the north coast, and the convoys, all turned towards the line of the River Bidassoa.

*June 22nd.*—Giron and Longa, two Spanish leaders, entered Guipuseoa. The sixth British division, moved from Medina Pomar to Vitoria. The remainder of the allied army followed in pursuit of Joseph on the road to Pampeluna. Reille, in command of the rearguard, halted at Salvatierra, until assured all the French had passed, when he marched to Huerta in the valley of the Araquil, 30 miles from the field of the battle.

Clausel, on the evening of this day, on the march by way of Aracete to join King Joseph at Vitoria, received news of the French disaster and retired to Logrono.

*June 23rd.*—Joseph halted at Yrursum.

Graham with the left wing by the pass of Adrian towards Toloso.

Foy to Villa Real to cover the concentration of the fugitive garrisons at Toloso.

*June 24th.*—Joseph to Pampeluna.

A rearguard action took place between Graham and Foy at Villa Real; Graham outflanked the French, who retired on Toloso.

Clausel at Logrono.

*June 25th.*—Foy offered battle to Graham in front of Toloso. His position being strong, Graham again outflanked the French, who, profiting by darkness, again made good their retreat.

Clausel at Logrono. Wellington, in the meantime, having learned his position, with two brigades of cavalry and four divisions of infantry marched by way of Tafalla to intercept his retreat.

The heavy cavalry, D'Urban's Portuguese, and two divisions of infantry to Logrono.

Hill blockaded Pampeluna.

*June 26th and 27th.*—Graham halted to obtain news of Wellington's movements.

The French convoys entered France.

\* Alison: "History of Europe."

Clausel, having made a forced march of 60 miles in 40 hours, reached Tudela, and thinking he had escaped the toils, hoped to reach France by way of Tafalla; but Wellington having reached this place, Clausel, disappointed in his expectations, marched for Zaragosa.

Madrid was finally evacuated by the French, who together with their friends and partisans made haste to cross the River Ebro.

Suchet, who, notwithstanding a defeat at Castalla, and the subsequent operations of Sir John Murray, had retained his position on the river Zucar, now abandoned Valencia, and with all his forces retired across the Ebro (leaving garrisons only in Saguntum and Peniscola), distributing his forces between Tarragona and Tortosa.

*June 28th.*—Foy passed the river Urumia, throwing a garrison of 2,600 men into San Sebastian.

*June 29th.*—Foy passed the river Oyursum.

*June 30th.*—Foy halted on the river Oyursum.

Passages surrendered to Longa.

*July 1st.*—Garrison of Guitereau escaped to San Sebastian.

Foy passed the river Bidassoa.

Reille at Vera and Viriata, having received supplies of ammunition and artillery, with 25,000 French troops occupied a defensive line from Vera to the bridge of Behobic.

Graham invested San Sebastian.

Clausel at Zaragosa.

*July 2nd to 7th.*—Wellington entrusted Mina with the further pursuit of Clausel, who retired towards the French frontier by way of Jaca.

Hill, without abandoning the siege of Pampeluna, despatched part of his forces into the valley of the Bastan, who cleared the valley of French troops.

The Spanish frontier from Roncesvalles to the mouth of the Bidassoa was now occupied by the allied army, the whole of the north-western provinces of Spain having been abandoned by the French armies, with the exception of the three fortified strongholds of Pampeluna, Santona, and San Sebastian.

#### *Napier's Observations on the Strategy of the Campaign.\**

"1. In this campaign of three weeks Wellington marched with 100,000 men 600 miles, passed six great rivers, gained one decisive battle, invested two fortresses, and drove 120,000 veteran troops from Spain. This immense result could not have been obtained if Joseph had followed Napoleon's instructions; Wellington could not then have turned the line of the Douro. It could not have been attained if Joseph had acted with

\* Napier, "History of the War in the Peninsula."

ordinary skill after the line of the Douro was passed. Time was to him most precious, yet when, contrary to his expectations, he had concentrated his armies behind the Carrion, he made no effort to delay his enemy on that river; he judged it an unfit position, that is, unfit for a great battle; but he could have made Wellington lose a day, perhaps two or three; and behind the upper Pisuerga he might have saved a day or two more. Reille, who was with the army of Portugal on the right of the King, complained that no officers of that army knew the Pisuerga sufficiently to place the troops in position: the King then had cause to remember Napoleon's dictum, namely, that 'to command an army well a general must think of nothing else.' For why was the course of the Pisuerga unknown when the King's headquarters had been for several months within a day's journey of it?

"2. The Carrion and the Pisuerga being given up, the country about the Hormaza was occupied, and the three French armies were in mass between that stream and Burgos: yet Wellington's right wing only, that is to say, 23,000 infantry and five brigades of cavalry, drove Reille's troops over the Arlanzan, and the castle of Burgos was abandoned. This was on June 12th, the three French armies, not less than 50,000 fighting men, had been in position since the 9th, and the King's letters prove that he desired to fight in that country, which was favourable for all arms. Nothing then could be more opportune than Wellington's advance on the 12th, because a retrograde defensive system is unsuited to French soldiers, whose impatient courage leads them always to attack; and the news of Napoleon's victory at Bautzen had just arrived to excite their ardour. Wherefore Joseph should have retaken the offensive when Wellington approached the Hormaza: and as the left and centre of the allies were at Villa Diego and Castroxerez, the greatest part at the former, that is to say, one march distant, the 26,000 men immediately in front would probably have been forced back over the Pisuerga, and the King have gained time for Sarrut, Foy and Clausel to join him. Did the English general then owe his success to fortune, to his adversary's fault, rather than to his own skill? Not so. He had judged the King's military capacity, he had seen his haste, his confusion, his trouble; and, knowing well the moral power of rapidity and boldness in such circumstances, had acted daringly indeed, but wisely; for daring is wisdom, it is the highest part of war.

"3. Wellington's mode of turning the line of the Ebro was a fine strategie illustration. It was by no means certain, yet failure would still have left great advantages. It was certain he would gain Santander, and fix a new base of operations on the coast; and he would still have had the power of turning the

King's right by operating between him and the coast ; the errors of his adversary only gave him additional advantages, which he seized. But if Joseph, instead of spreading his army from Espejo on his right to the Logrono road on his left, had kept only cavalry on the latter route, and on the main road in front of Puncorbo, if he had massed his army to his right, pivoting upon Miranda or Frias, scouring all the roads towards the sources of the Ebro, the Allies could never have passed the defiles and descended upon Vitoria. They would have marched then by Valmaceda upon Bilbao ; but Joseph could, by the road of Orduma, have met them there, and with a force increased by Foy's and Sarrut's divisions, and the Italians ; meanwhile, Clausel would have come to Vitoria, and the heaped convoys have gained France in safety.

" 4. When the King resolved to fight at Vitoria he should, on the 19th and 20th, have broken some of the bridges on the Zadora, and covered others with field works, to enable him to sally forth upon the attacking army ; he should have entrenched the defile of Puebla, and occupied the heights above in strength ; his position on the lower Zadora would then have been formidable. But his great fault was the line of operation. His reasons for avoiding Guipuscoa were valid, his true line was down the Ebro ; but Zaragoza should have been his base, since Aragon was fertile and more friendly than any other province of Spain. It is true he would thus have abandoned Foy, yet that general, reinforced with the reserve from Bayonne, would have had 20,000 men and the fortress of San Sebastian, and a strong corps must have remained to watch him. The King, first reinforced by Clausel, and ultimately by Suchet, would have had 100,000 men to oppose the Allies, weakened as they would then be by detachments watching Foy."

Observations 5, 6, 7, and 8 concern the battle of Vitoria.

" 9. It has been observed by French writers, and the opinion has been also entertained by many English officers, that after the battle Wellington should have passed the frontier in mass, and marched upon Bayonne, instead of chasing Clausel and Foy on the right and left ; and it, as the same authors assert, Bayonne was then indefensible, the criticism is just ; because the fugitive French army, having lost all its guns, and being without musket ammunition, could not have checked its pursuers for a moment. But if Bayonne had resisted, and it was impossible for Wellington to suspect its real condition, much mischief might have accrued from such a hasty advance. Foy and Clausel, coming down upon the field of Vitoria, would have driven away, if they did not destroy, the sixth division ; they would have recovered all the trophies ; the King's army, returning by Jaca into Aragon, would have reorganised itself from Suchet's depôts,

and that Marshal was actually coming up with his army from Valencia. Little would then have been gained by the battle."

*Remarks.*

The campaign of Vitoria is a brilliant example of a general acting against his adversary's line of communications without exposing his own. This operation, successfully carried out by Wellington, was chiefly due to three causes.

First, the angular configuration of the Iberian Peninsula with respect to the particular theatre of operations.

Second, the fact that the British Navy possessed complete command of the sea.

Third, the secrecy and celerity of Wellington's movements.

At the proper time, and proper place, Wellington transferred the long lines which connected his army in the field, back through the frontier of Portugal, with Lisbon on the sea coast, to the short lines which connected his army with Spanish ports on the north coast of Spain.

**Example of an Unsuccessful Stroke against an Enemy's Line of Communications.**

CAMPAIGN OF CORUNNA.—PENINSULA, 1808-9. (MAP II.)

*General Situation when English Forces are put in Motion.*

The British Government, having resolved to aid the Spaniards in the struggle against the French, disembarked two armies in the Peninsula. One army under Sir John Moore at Lisbon, the second army under Sir David Baird at Corunna.

Sir John Moore's army, in two divisions, left Lisbon at the end of October, 1808, and directed its march towards the line of the River Ebro. The first division, under Sir John Moore, *via* the route Abrantes, Almeida, Ciudad Rodrigo; the second division, one composed mainly of a column of artillery and wagon trains, owing to the above route having been reported as impracticable for heavy-wheeled transport, marched *via* the circuitous route of Elvas, Badajos, Talavera, and then north over the Sierra Guadarama.

On the 18th November Sir John Moore, with that part of the army under his own immediate command, arrived at Salamanca. The second division did not effect the passage of the Sierra Guadarama till the 27th of the month. In the meantime, Sir David Baird's army, having disembarked at Corunna on the 13th October, had only succeeded in reaching Astorga, which is four days' march from Salamanca, on the 20th November.

"Thus the British army, with a total strength of 30,000 men, is in three separate divisions, separated from each other between 80 and 100 miles, and with no common base or line of operations;

their allies, the Spaniards, 100 miles further in advance, were also divided into three armies." \*

The French troops, 180,000 strong, were in the basin of Vitoria.

The French successively defeated the Spanish armies at Logrono, Durango, Espinosa, and Regnosa.

Napoleon arrived and occupied Burgos.

The Spaniards were again defeated at Tudela. By this time the Spanish forces were so "disjointed and severed as to be incapable of acting in concert, or affording any support to each other; while Napoleon, at the head of 100,000 men, occupied a central position in the heart of them all, and was master of the great road leading to the capital." \*

Napoleon, making dispositions to watch the separated fractions of the Spanish forces, and entrusting to Lefebvre's corps the duty of watching the British troops, forced the Somo Sierra pass on the 30th November, and continued his march on Madrid. On the 3rd October he occupied that city, at once commencing preparations to subdue the Spanish provinces of Estramadura and Andalusia.

In the meantime the British army had been quietly concentrating. Owing to the successive defeats of the Spanish armies, Sir John Moore was much perplexed, and at one moment resolved to retreat. Sir David Baird actually commenced his retreat on Corunna, his base. Sir John Moore, however, chiefly for political reasons, changed his mind, and resolved to attack the enemy's communications with France. His objective was the line of the River Carrion, in the valley of which river Soult was posted with 15,000 men. Fully aware of the dangers of the stroke he was about to undertake, owing to his own paucity of numbers, and the now proved unreliability of the Spaniards, Sir John Moore at the same time made preparations for a retreat, and established magazines, not only on his own line of advance from Lisbon, but also at Benavente, Astorga, and Lugo on the road to Corunna.

"To facilitate junction with Sir David Baird, Sir John Moore first directed his march towards Valladolid; but, acquainted with the fall of Madrid, and the unsuspecting security in which Soult's corps lay in the valley of the River Carrion, the columns were moved towards Toro and Benavente, and Valderas was assigned as the point of junction of the two armies." \*

On the 16th British headquarters were established at Toro.

"No sooner was the advance of Sir John Moore known at Madrid than it instantly paralysed the movements of the whole French armies in the South of Spain. Napoleon immediately

\* Alison, "History of Europe."

despatched orders in all directions to suspend the expeditions into different provinces which were in preparation.”\*

Napoleon resolved on instant action, and determined, by way of a counter stroke, to attack the British general's own line of communications with Lisbon. He concentrated 50,000 men and commenced one of those lightning marches in the carrying out of which he was so pre-eminently successful.

On the evening of the 22nd December he arrived at the foot of the Sierra Guadarama. In spite of snow and sleet and great difficulties, he passed the mountains.

On the 26th he established his headquarters at Tordesillas, the cavalry being at Valladolid, and Ney's corps at Rio Seco.

In the meantime the following movement of the British forces had taken place:—

On the 20th the junction between Sir David Baird and Sir John Moore was effected at Mayorga.

On the 21st the united British forces were at Sahagun.

On the 23rd Moore made preparations to attack Soult, but learning of movements of large French forces set in motion against him from the south, suspended his intended operations, and on the 24th commenced his retreat, not on Lisbon, but on Corunna.

The reason for this change of line was Ney's march by way of Zamorra towards Benavente, which place cut Sir John Moore's line with Portugal. “If he (Ney) could have reached the latter town (Benavente) before Sir John Moore he would have cut him off from the line of retreat to Galicia also, and rendered the situation of the British army all but desperate.”\*

On the 26th the troops under Sir David Baird repassed the River Esla. Moore with the rearguard protecting the passage of the stores and baggage crossed the bridge of Castro Gonzalo.

Sir John Moore reached Benavente before the enemy, “and the hazardous operation of crossing the Esla, then a roaring torrent swollen by melting snow, and over planks laid across the broken arches of the bridge of Castro, in the dark, was successfully performed by General Crauford with the rearguard.”\*

The destruction of the bridge over the river Esla delayed the French pursuit for two days, and enabled the British army to escape Napoleon's counter stroke. Benavente here is what is called a “strategic point” in strategy, as on its possession depended the fate of the British army.

It is unnecessary to follow the subsequent retreat of the British army by way of Astorga and Lugo to Corunna, where the whole army re-embarked, and the pursuit by the French. The campaign, so far as it concerns a strategic stroke against a line of communications, ends with the retirement of the British

\* Alison, “History of Europe.”

army over the River Esla. The arrival of the British forces at Benavente before those of the French proved their safety.

This campaign illustrates not one, but two, direct strokes made by the respective leaders of the two opposing armies, each against the other's line of communications.

First, Sir John Moore's stroke against the French line, in the direction of the valley of the River Carrion, foiled and countered by Napoleon's counter stroke against Sir John Moore's line through Portugal to Lisbon; this stroke again foiled by the English commander's change of his original to a fresh line of communications and retreat. In both instances it is seen how the mere threat of such a movement alone and automatically forced a sudden change in the whole plans and dispositions of the commander whose line was threatened.

Alison remarks: "A calm consideration of the consequences of his (Sir John Moore's) campaign must, with all impartial observers, lead to the same result. In the whole annals of the Revolutionary war there is not to be found a single movement more ably conceived or attended with more important consequences than that which he attempted against Soult's corps on the Carrion. Levelled against the vital line of the enemy's communications, it had literally paralysed every hostile army in Spain; snatched the Spanish monarchy from the verge of destruction when its own resources were exhausted, and by drawing Napoleon himself with his terrible legions into the northern extremity of the peninsula, it both gave time to the Southern provinces to restore their armies and arm their fortresses, and averted the war from Portugal till an opportunity of organising fresh means of resistance within its frontiers was afforded. But for this bold and well-conceived advance Andalusia would have been overrun, Valencia taken, Zaragoza subdued within a few weeks; and before the Emperor was called from the theatre of Peninsula warfare by the Austrian preparations, he would have realised the favourite threat of planting the French eagles on the towers of Lisbon. These great results, however, were attended with proportionate dangers: Napoleon with 70,000 chosen troops was speedily sweeping round the audacious enemy who had thus interrupted his designs, and but for the celerity and skill of the subsequent retreat to Astorga, the army which achieved them must certainly have been consigned to destruction."\*

#### Why Moore Failed and Wellington Succeeded.

Since Moore and Wellington, in carrying out their respective strokes at the French line of communications, both directed their

\* "History of Europe".

advance towards the same point in the theatre of operations, it may be asked why Moore failed and Wellington succeeded.

1. In the Corunna campaign the forces under command of Sir John Moore were not sufficiently strong for the purpose in view. Could Moore have maintained himself in the most advanced position he reached, the line of the River Carrion, he would yet have been overwhelmed by the far superior forces put in motion against him by Napoleon.

But the Allied Army under Wellington, even could Joseph have moved against his line of communications or had concentrated to attack him on the flank whilst Wellington was in movement towards the Upper Ebro, was yet sufficiently strong to have fought a battle on equal terms. A general, therefore, who attempts a *strategic* stroke against the line of communications of his enemy must employ a force sufficiently strong to be able to encounter on equal terms any combination which may be set in motion against him, otherwise he risks being overwhelmed by superior forces which may, under certain conditions, oppose him in front, flanks and rear.

2. Sir John Moore's intentions and the movements of his army became known to Napoleon sufficiently early for him to take the necessary action to frustrate them.

But Wellington's real design and the movements of his forces were kept concealed from the French till the last possible moment. The movement of the left wing, under Graham, remained undiscovered by Joseph until that wing had actually arrived on the flank of his strategic front, and was already almost within striking distance of the French line of communications. Joseph might possibly have moved against the allied right wing or rear, following somewhat Napoleon's plan in the Corunna campaign, but Joseph probably possessed neither sufficient military ability nor vigour in execution to be successful, even had time and opportunity permitted the adoption of such a course.

3. Wellington on the Upper Ebro immediately threatened the French line of communications with France, and at the period of the Vitoria campaign the French were more dependent on this line than they had ever been during the earlier campaigns in the Peninsula. Joseph was consequently compelled to conform to the British general's movement. For the French all hopes of gaining the initiative vanished the moment the Allied Army crossed the Douro and reached the Upper Ebro.

#### Strong and Weak Lines of Communications.

All lines of communications may be roughly divided into two categories, namely—(a) Strong lines; (b) Weak lines. Short lines are *generally* strong. Long lines are *generally* weak.

Wellington's line of communications with Santander in his campaigns of 1813 and 1814 were short and strong.

The long line by which the British garrison in Cabul (1842) maintained connection with the then frontiers of the Indian Empire by way of Jellalabad, the Khyber Pass, Peshawar, and through the Punjab to Ferozepore, was very weak and insecure. The insecurity of this line was consequently always a cause of extreme anxiety. After the massacre of the Cabul garrison during its retreat to Jellalabad, it became necessary to relieve the garrison besieged in Jellalabad. The weakness and insecurity of this long line was especially emphasised by running as it did, for a greater part of its length, through the territory of an ally, Runjit Sing, the friendly intentions of whom, and those of the Sikh nation he ruled, were, however, a matter of grave doubt and uncertainty, while the remaining section of the line continued through the formidable defile of the Khyber, which was in the possession of and commanded by the Afridis, an independent Pathan tribe on whom no reliance could be placed.

Coming to more recent times, the long lines of communications of the British forces in the war in South Africa were weak. These lines were constantly raided by independent Boer commandoes, and the necessary supplies for the army in the field were in consequence frequently interrupted and altogether stopped for more or less long periods. It is not going too far to assert that the whole strategy of the campaign after the fall of Bloemfontein and Pretoria, the capitals of the two States, was affected and determined by the weakness of these long lines of communications. Every bridge had to be watched and guarded, and the railway had to be incessantly patrolled, practically throughout its length. Consequently, very large forces had to be detailed simply for the harassing duty of protecting the lines of communications. Yet in spite of every precaution, Boer commandoes on several occasions succeeded in raiding and traversing those lines, thereby causing an amount of worry and inconvenience, if nothing more, out of all proportion to the strategic result these raids actually achieved.

In stating that short lines are generally strong, and long lines are generally weak, the modifying adverb is purposely used, because British military history furnishes notable instances to the contrary.

For example, when, in 1805, Napoleon massed his forces on the northern coast of France at and in the neighbourhood of Boulogne, had he succeeded in landing on the English coast the sea line from France to England would have been a very short one, but not on that account secure, for it would always have been liable to interruption by the English fleet. It was this

consideration, coupled with the defeat of the combined French and Spanish fleets under Villeneuve off Ferrol by Calder, that induced him not to wait for the certain defeat of his fleet by Nelson, and to transfer his army at once from the Channel to the Danube, where at Ulm he took the Austrian general Mack prisoner two days before the battle of Trafalgar.

Again, in Lord Kitchener's advance to Khartoum the line of communications with Lower Egypt was very long, but not on that account weak, for, protected by the desert and the extremely inhospitable nature of the country on both its flanks, the line was practically secured against all attempts at cutting and interrupting the stream of supplies to the army operating at its extremity.

#### **Value of Rapid and Safe Communications towards a Threatened Area of Operations.**

The great advantage of the offensive lies, as has already been pointed out, in the initiative; that is, the choice of the real line of attack. The defence, unless its intelligence be exceptionally good, cannot tell on what line or from what quarter the blow will fall. What, then, should be the plan of the defence? If the defence places all its forces on all possible lines of approach by which the enemy may advance, its forces will be everywhere weak; they will be dispersed and unable to act in combination, and so risk being beaten in detail. On the other hand, if the defence concentrates at one point, and the enemy advance by some other line, the plan of defence is equally faulty. And the defence must concentrate if it is to meet the presumably superior forces of the offence with the probability of a favourable result. Concentration, for the defence, is one of the elements of success.

How, then, reconcile these two conflicting considerations? Dispersion to stop and hold the enemy, and concentration to engage him with at any rate equal chances of victory. The only method is in the employment of stopping or detaining forces on each of the possible lines of attack by the enemy, at the same time concentrating the main army on some central point in rear from which it can despatch reinforcements towards the real line of attack, when that line is once declared and the enemy is committed to it. Rapid and safe communications, both direct and lateral, towards the threatened point, by rail, river, and road, are therefore of supreme importance. It is of as much if not more importance than the construction of vast entrenched camps and huge fortresses. Good communications by means of which troops can easily and rapidly concentrate on any threatened point should be the first consideration, then that of artificial obstacles, such as entrenched positions and fortresses.

### Choice of a Line of Operations.

The choice of a line of operations, which eventually becomes a line of communications, is the basis on which every plan of campaign rests. If the choice be good, that is, if the line or lines of operations bear a correct direction with regard to the base or bases from which it or they start, and with regard to the point or points towards which they operate, the plan of campaign will be good. But if the line or lines be incorrect, then in spite of victory the strategy will be complicated and involved, the manœuvring of masses of men will be limited and paralysed, and restrictions upon all movements will and must remain until such time as the line or lines be changed from an incorrect to a correct direction with reference to their base and front.

The natural line of retreat of an army in case of defeat is usually the line by which it has advanced—that is to say, its line of communications—because along that line it will find dépôts of stores and supplies, and along that line reinforcements will be advancing. If the line of communications of an army be also its line of retreat, its safety and security become doubly important. Hence the advantage in strategic manœuvres of alternative lines of communications and divergent lines of retreat.

### The Protection of a Line of Communications is Best Ensured by a Vigorous Offensive towards a *Decisive Objective Point*.

The most efficient protection for a line of communications lies in a vigorous offensive towards the objective, provided that objective be some really decisive point, as the enemy's capital or other important centre or area, or against the armies of the enemy in the field; in other words, in a persistent initiative which will compel the enemy to conform to the movements of the army which has adopted the initiative, rather than in permitting that adversary to remain undisturbed and free to adopt independent movements of his own. This is especially applicable to wars between civilised nations, both possessing highly organised armies of their own.

Thus in Plate II., Fig. 1, is shown the serious consequences to Blue at B if Red succeed in interrupting the line of communications at D. But if the Blue commander, owing to a vigorous offensive, succeeded in obtaining possession of the objective point C before Red could interpose a force at D, the stroke at D might fail altogether in its object, and this is more likely to be so the more important C is, say the capital of a country, for then its possession by Blue might of itself terminate the war. But even presuming Blue could not reach C the objective before Red interposed at D, however sound and strategically correct the

advance on D might be, the leader of Red would need to be very strong minded to continue the movement towards D. For the menace of a determined advance on C by Blue, especially if (to repeat) that point be the capital, or other important and decisive centre, would have the effect of unduly arousing the fears of the inhabitants, who, not understanding the object of an advance on D by the general in command of their forces, would insist, through their political leaders, on recalling the force in movement towards D, for a more direct defence of C. To the ignorant mind, the more direct the defence the more real it appears to be, and the greater the protection it apparently affords.

In the Boer War, the case of the advance of the British forces from Bloemfontein to Johannesburg and Pretoria, and the occupation of these two important places, may be cited as an instance contrary to what has just been stated, namely, that protection to a line of communications is best ensured by a vigorous offensive towards a decisive objective. But, apart from other considerations, it must be recollected:—

First, that the population of the Transvaal was an agricultural rather than an urban people, to whom the possession or loss of either place did not much signify.

Secondly, that the Government was irregular, and not so complex and centralised as that of more civilised countries, and could therefore be almost equally well carried on from any other town, village, or even laager.

Thirdly, that the chief object of the Boer nation, and their leaders, both political and military, was to offer a prolonged defence. This could only be effected by saving and economising their forces. Any operation, therefore, tending to lead to a decisive battle and consequent losses of men was carefully avoided by their leaders. A more civilised nation and a population more concentrated in the towns would probably have insisted on the defence of two centres of such importance as Johannesburg and Pretoria. This would have immediately led to decisive battles, in which event the defeat of the Boer forces, followed by the occupation and possession of the two cities, would, it is extremely probable, have had a more decisive effect in terminating the campaign than as a matter of fact was the case.

But even when acting against savage foes and very mobile forces, the vigorous offensive is often the best policy for the protection of the line of communications. The second invasion of Mysore, as will presently be shown, is a proof of the truth of this maxim. In this campaign the British forces were opposed by perhaps the most inmobile and active cavalry they have ever yet encountered, namely, the Mysore Horse. But the direct vigorous offensive movement by which Lord Cornwallis, based on the

Carnatic, pushed forward towards Seringapatam, the Mysore capital, by way of Bangalore, was completely successful in confining that cavalry to a strict strategical defensive. Cornwallis's advance prevented the Mysore cavalry from carrying out its former independent movements, and denied to that cavalry the adoption of what may be termed a "harassing strategic rôle," a rôle it had hitherto successfully, and at will, adopted in all previous Mysore campaigns, both under Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sultan.

But the maxim that a vigorous offensive movement towards the objective is of itself a sufficient protection to a line of communications is necessarily governed by two important conditions which must not be overlooked.

First, the line of communications must bear a true and correct direction with regard to the base line at one, and the strategic front of the army at the other, extremity.

Second, the line of communications must not be unduly long if the enemy's forces are very inmobile as compared with their opponents, or if long, protection to the line must be sought from the advantageous use of natural obstacles such as mountain barriers or rivers, with few points of passage, which must be in possession of the offence, or by the construction of artificial obstacles such as fortified posts at close intervals along that line.

As an illustration of the truth of the maxim, and of the two conditions by which it is qualified, two consecutive campaigns carried out by British armies are now given in detail. Both occurred within a few months of each other, were fought over the same theatre of war, in which the objective in each instance was the same, and both were carried out by practically the same army.

#### FIRST INVASION OF MYSORE, 1790. (MAP XII.)

Lord Cornwallis, Governor-General of India, having assented to an invasion of Mysore, then ruled by Tippoo Sultan, the command of the army was entrusted to General Medows, already known to fame for his gallant defence of St. Lucia.

The general plan of the campaign was as follows:—

General Medows, then at Trichinopoly, May, 1790, in command of 15,000 men, was to reduce Palghautcherry and the forts of the province of Coimbatore, and, "having secured this rich country as a base of supply, to ascend the Gujelhutty Pass, and so invade Mysore from the South." A second army, three brigades, under Colonel Kelly, was to penetrate into the Baramahal for the double object of "protecting the right flank and communications of the main army, and to parry any stroke of Tippoo against the Carnatic."

General Medows' line of advance lay through Tanjore, Trichinopoly and Caroor. Thus, when, having arrived at

Coimbatore, he should turn north towards the Mysore plateau, the strategic front of his army would be parallel to his line of communications, a strategic position the disadvantages of which are enumerated in the following chapter. But Meadows' true base was at Madras, and the line connecting his army with Madras by land was long, insecure, and possessed the further disadvantage of running parallel and close to the Mysore frontier. It is evident, then, that the duty committed to the force under Colonel Kelly was extremely important, and on the way that duty was performed would in a great measure depend the success of the campaign. From the plan of the campaign, it appears that the safeguarding of the line of communications and the protection of the Carnatic were not to be sought in a purely passive defence on Colonel Kelly's part, but rather from forward offensive moves of the two armies, which it was hoped would tie Tippoo to Mysore, and prevent that stroke on the Carnatic, on his part, which was both anticipated and feared. But it was open to Tippoo's numerically superior army, based on the central position of the Mysore plateau, to contain one or other of the two armies opposed to him, and to engage the army not so contained with the whole concentrated remainder of his forces.

In addition to the advantage of his central position, Tippoo, in the Mysore cavalry, light, irregular horsemen, possessed an admirable strategic weapon for offensive purposes. Military history from the most ancient to modern times proves that a force of light irregular cavalry, which can exist in the country it is operating in, and is capable of performing rapid, continuous, and lengthy marches, has frequently brought to ruin and upset the best laid plans. This weapon lay in Tippoo's hands, and, like his soldier father Hyder Ali, he understood the use to which it should be put.

On 26th May, 1790, Meadows started from Trichinopoly, but the opening movements, owing to defects in transport, were slow. Caroor was not reached till the middle of June, twenty miles in fifty days, and more than 1,200 sick had here to be left behind. The forts of Avaracherry and Darapooram were occupied without resistance. Coimbatore was reached and occupied without resistance on the 21st July. An advance of 156 miles had taken fifty-six days.

From Coimbatore a force was despatched for the siege of Palghautcherry, but, unable to reach its objective on account of heavy rains, returned to Coimbatore. Expeditions were then despatched for the capture of Errode, which fell August 6th, and for the siege of Dindigul, which surrendered August 23rd, upon which a second expedition started for Palghautcherry.

In the meanwhile, leaving 4,000 cavalry to observe the

British, Tippoo retired to the Mysore plateau. This cavalry of observation were driven north of the River Bhavani, and eventually up the Gujelhutty Pass, the fort of Sattamungalam on the north bank of the Bhavani being surprised and captured.

Medows had now secured the Province of Coimbatore for his further advance into Mysore, which according to his original plan he proposed to carry out by the Gujelhutty Pass, and to commence in October. But, at the moment, his army was scattered, for it was split up into three divisions, between Palghautcherry, Coimbatore, and Sattamungalam.

The army of Kelly at Arnee, on which so much depended, had not even yet commenced its forward movement into the Baramahal, not being in a condition to take the field.

Tippoo, hitherto inactive, now commenced to move. On the 2nd September, at the head of 40,000 men, he left Seringapatam, passed south through the Gujelhutty Pass, and crossed the Bhavani river at the Poongar ford, September 12th.

News of Tippoo's approach with his main army to the Bhavani river was sent to Medows at Coimbatore, and the English leaders on the spot made dispositions to block his advance. It is unnecessary here to follow the moves and counter moves of the opposing armies for the next few days (September 12th to 18th), but the British retired from the line of the River Bhavani to Coimbatore. Here Medows concentrated his forces from September 18th to September 26th. Palghautcherry had fallen.

Tippoo used the time occupied in this concentration of his adversaries' scattered detachments by marching on Errode, which, at his approach, was evacuated on September 25th.

By this move, correctly directed at the strategical flank of the British front of operations, the initiative passed at once and automatically from Medows to Tippoo.

On the 29th, Medows, having abandoned all idea of continuing the offensive, started in pursuit of Tippoo, but took a wrong direction, and that astute leader moved south of Errode, knowing that Medows would be compelled to move to Caroor to meet a convoy, when he, in his turn, hoped to capture Coimbatore. This place, however, having been reinforced, Tippoo, disappointed in his hopes of effecting its capture, advanced still further south to Daraporam, which capitulated on the 8th October.

Medows returned to Coinbatore to strengthen its defences, and found himself unable to stir thence for three weeks. Then he started for Errode, but Tippoo had disappeared, no one knew whither.

Eventually, after a week, it was discovered that Tippoo had crossed the River Cauvery, and was marching northwards, his

objective manifestly being the second army, which, having at last left Arnee at the end of September, had taken up a position at Caveripatam during the first week of November.

On the 9th November Tippoo's cavalry gained touch with this army, and on the 10th his army manœuvred for attack, but, foiled by the tactical dispositions of Colonel Maxwell, who had succeeded Colonel Kelly (dead), Tippoo on the 14th turned south, for Medows, on the track of the Mysore leader, had gained the plateau by the Tapoor Pass, and was within a day's march of him.

On the 17th, Medows effected his junction with Maxwell, and found himself at the head of the finest army hitherto sent into the field by the British army in India. But this fine army did nothing. For Tippoo, resolved that it would be preferable to wage war on British soil rather than in his own country of Mysore, held on south, and, in his turn, on the 18th, slipped through the Tapoor Pass, himself conducting a rearguard detaining action at its northern end. He determined upon a raid on Trichinopoly, but gave out that his objective was Caroor. His marching powers being superior to those of his opponents, he followed the left bank of the River Cauvery, reached Trichinopoly, plundered the island of Seringham, and then, turning north again, marched "into the heart of Coromandel, plundering, burning, and destroying as he went." He attacked Thingar, but, foiled in two assaults, he continued north, and took and sacked Trincomallee. Permacol surrendered to him, and thence he again changed the direction of his march and turned south-east to Pondicherry, "where he remained for several weeks in negotiation with the French." The British, who had been following in pursuit, here left him, and directed their march to Madras, at which place the army eventually arrived at the end of January, 1792.\*

And so, in failure, ended the first invasion of Mysore.

#### *Remarks.*

To what causes may this failure be ascribed?

First, to the faulty direction of the line of communications with regard to its true base and strategic front.

Second, to the length and insecurity of that line, which for a great part of its length ran roughly parallel to the Mysore Plateau, lending itself to, and even inviting, attack.

Third, the above two causes entailed a division of the British army into two forces, one for the invasion and one for safeguarding the line of communications of that force. Both forces were separated by a great distance and were not in touch with each other, thus rendering each force liable to be beaten in detail.

\* Authority : Hon. J. W. Fortescue, "History of the British Army."

Medows, having secured the province of Coimbatore, commenced his offensive movements north towards the Mysore Highlands. That movement was in its initial stages successful, but when Tippoo moved, Medows' forces were scattered, and the advanced detachments were not strong enough to stem Tippoo's rush south through the Gujelhutty Pass. Thrown back from the line of the River Bhavani to Coimbatore, while Medows was concentrating his scattered divisions, Tippoo was left free to act, and this opportunity he rightly used by directing his stroke against the strategic flank of Medows' front—that is, the right flank, for that flank covered the point where his line of communications ended and his front commenced. From the moment he gained that point, the initiative passed entirely from Medows to Tippoo.

It is interesting to inquire what would have been the effect on Tippoo's movements when he gave the British Army the slip, in his advance south through the Tapoor Pass, for the purpose of raiding the Carnatic, had Medows in his turn, instead of following in pursuit, countered by an advance into Mysore.

It appears certain that such a counter stroke on Medows' part would effectually have put a stop to Tippoo's raiding, and that the counter stroke, if not successful so far as the attainment of any immediate objective which Medows may have proposed to himself, would have compelled Tippoo to hasten back to the defence of his own country. For, as will be learnt from a study of the second invasion of Mysore, this is what actually occurred on that occasion. So soon as Tippoo found his country threatened, he broke up from before Pondicherry and hurried with all speed into Mysore. On the other hand, that the British leader, once committed to a counter stroke, would have succeeded in penetrating very far, is extremely questionable. For Tippoo, being far the quicker mover of the two, would probably have headed back Medows, or at least interposed between Medows and his objective. Under the most favourable circumstances the collecting of supplies from the immediate surrounding country was necessarily a matter of greater difficulty for the British than for the Mysorean army, and that difficulty would have been immensely increased by a simple order of Tippoo to the inhabitants of Mysore to remove or conceal their supplies, an order which his local administrators on the spot would have seen to, and which the inhabitants would not have dared to disobey. The march of the British army would therefore have been slow, so that Tippoo, even if foiled in interposing between Medows and his objective, would in any case have gained that officer's rear, and forced on an action, in which it is probable that the front of the two armies would have faced their respective bases. But such a situation would not

have been reciprocal, for whilst a defeat for the British in foreign territory would have been disastrous, the consequences of defeat to Tippoo, in his own country, and with greater facilities for rallying broken troops, would have been tactical only, and would still have left him in a position to prosecute the campaign with his accustomed vigour.

SECOND INVASION OF MYSORE, 1791. (MAP XII.)

Lord Cornwallis, Governor-General of India, having arrived in Madras, took over command from Medows.

Cornwallis, himself a soldier, had never been in favour of Medows' original plan of the invasion of Mysore, with its long line of communications, and he now determined upon a direct advance from Madras. The line along which he proposed to operate was to be by way of Vellore and Amboor, from these places to ascend the Mysore plateau, and thence march direct upon Bangalore, at that time reported to be the strongest fortress in Mysore. From Bangalore the advance was to be continued to Seringapatam, the Mysore capital.

This line was the shortest and at the same time the most secure. The posts captured by Medows in the previous campaign were abandoned with the exception of Palghantcherry and Coimbatore, which were retained with the double object of keeping a hold upon Coimbatore, and for lending a helping hand to a Bombay army which, based upon Tellicherry on the Malabar coast, was also to co-operate by an advance upon Seringapatam.

Additional aid from the north was expected from the armies of the Nizam and the Mahrattas, "who for some months had been feebly besieging Darwar and Copul to the north of the Toombuddra."

On February 5th Cornwallis commenced his advance upon Vellore from Vellout, near Madras, where the army had assembled, "having spread reports of his intention to ascend the passes near Amboor and to penetrate into Barannahal."

Arrived at Vellore, however, after constant feints to the south-west, he wheeled "suddenly northward to Chittoor, and there, turning sharply to the westward, ascended the ghauts through the easy pass of Muglee."

By February 21st he had gained Palamnair on the table land "without the firing of a shot."

Tippoo, in the meanwhile, so soon as he heard of his opponent's intentions, at once broke up his camp at Pondicherry, and gained the Mysore plateau by the passes of Changamah and Policode.

Cornwallis from Palamnair marched direct upon Bangalore by way of Mulwagal, Colar, and Ooscotta.

Tippoo's cavalry obtained contact with the British army near Colar, but "not till Cornwallis was within two days' march of

Bangalore were his troops seen in real strength." The Mysore cavalry at once commenced to worry the march of the British by hanging on to their flanks and threatening the baggage columns. But these harassing tactics had no strategic result, and the tactical dispositions made by Cornwallis were so excellent as to deprive them of any effect. On March 6th Cornwallis encamped before Bangalore.

On March 7th the city of Bangalore, containing large supplies, was, after severe fighting, captured, but not the fort.

On the night of March 21st and March 22nd the fort was assaulted and taken, and by its capture an advanced base was secured for the further movement upon Seringapatam.

This advance Cornwallis did not immediately commence. Instead, on March 28th he moved to meet a convoy from Amboor and to effect a junction with the Nizam's cavalry. This junction was effected at Cottapilly, 80 miles north of Bangalore. He then turned south-east to Vencatagirry to permit a reinforcement of 4,000 native and 700 European troops to join, whence he returned to Bangalore.

The delay involved in these movements proved fatal to the complete success of the campaign.

It was most important that the capture of the Mysorean capital should be effected before June. In June the monsoon commences, and the heavy rains which fall in that part of India at this season of the year are unfavourable to the proper carrying on of operations. Not only so, but the city and fort of Seringapatam are situated on an island in the Cauvery river. That river in the rainy season becomes a broad and deep torrent, impassable except at certain places; and it surrounds the walls of the fort of Seringapatam on three sides, thus greatly increasing the ordinary difficulties of an assault.

The reason of this delay is assigned to want of forage and to great dearth of transport animals; but when, nearly six weeks later, Cornwallis finally made up his mind to continue his advance on Seringapatam, transport was still insufficient; officers were asked to give up their private transport, and women and boys were hired to carry shot for the guns. No advantage whatever appears to have been gained from the postponement of the forward movement.\*

Not until May 4th did Cornwallis set out from Bangalore. Rain, and heavy rain, had already commenced to fall, adding to

\* The management of transport as practised in India in modern times was not understood till a comparatively recent date. It seems, too, but fair criticism to remark that the transport which sufficed for the move of 80 miles from Bangalore to Cottapilly, and from Cottapilly to Vencatagirry and back to Bangalore, might if judiciously employed, together with the extra means afterwards taken to supplement that transport, have served to cover the 100 miles which separated Bangalore from Seringapatam.

the difficulties of a march much hampered, of course, by the Mysore cavalry, which laid waste the country as the army advanced.

On the 10th Malavelly was reached, and Cornwallis hoped to cross to the right bank of the Cauvery to effect a junction with Abercromby, who commanded the force which, it will be remembered, was to co-operate with him by an advance from Tellicherry to Seringapatam; but, owing to the heavy rains, the river was in flood and the fords were impassable.

The army then marched to Arekera, nine miles east of Seringapatam, where it arrived on May 13th; but the ford at this place was also impracticable.

On May 15th Cornwallis made a bold attempt to interpose between Tippoo, who with his army was in position near Arekera, and Seringapatam. This attempt was partly marred by a sudden and heavy thunderstorm, and partly by Tippoo himself, whose tactics were equal to the occasion. Contact between the opposing armies took place, and a severe engagement ensued. Cornwallis, foiled in his design, marched round the northern and western side of the capital, still hoping to join up with Abercromby.

It is here necessary to give a brief outline of Abercromby's movements.

On February 22nd this officer had started from Tellicherry, moving through Coorg, and thence by the pass of Pariapatain into Mysore territory. The country traversed, owing to its rugged character, and particularly to the density of the jungles, made the march one of great difficulty, and though the actual distance covered was not great, it was not till May 15th, nearly three months after the start, that Pariapatain, some forty miles west of Seringapatam, was reached. During the night and morning of this very day Cornwallis was fighting Tippoo at Arekera.

On May 21st Cornwallis ordered Abercromby to return to Malabar, and these instructions he carried out in safety, though "compelled to destroy some and to bury others of his heavy guns, and lost not only most of his cattle from the severity of the rains, but a large portion of the baggage."

The Mysore cavalry prevented any communication, much less junction, between the two armies: and here is apparent the great disadvantage of two armies operating from widely divergent bases, especially if constant communication between the two separated forces cannot be maintained. This disadvantage is the greater if the junction of the two forces has been originally planned, or is forced by the movements of the enemy, to take place within striking distance of that enemy.

On the 22nd Cornwallis destroyed his battering train and heavy equipment.

On the 26th the British General, still without any news of Abercromby, who had already retreated, was forced to abandon his position at Caniambaddy, and finally was compelled to retire northwards back to his advanced base at Bangalore. On his way, the expected contingent of Mahratta horse turned up, too late to render any aid.\*

#### *Remarks.*

With this retirement ended the second invasion of Mysore. Successful, in that Cornwallis had gained the Mysore plateau, and established himself at Bangalore, a strong fortress situated in the heart of the Mysore territory, and favourably placed when the time and opportunity should arrive for a repeated attempt on Seringapatam, it was a failure as regards the actual capture of that place.

Immediately upon Cornwallis adopting a vigorous offensive, and combining that offensive by advancing from Madras by a line of communications bearing a true and correct direction with his base and front of operations, Tippoo not only broke up his camp at Pondicherry and hastened to return for the protection of his own country, but the advance stopped all further raiding in British territory and strokes at his line of communications by the Mysore cavalry. Cornwallis's advance automatically rid the Carnatic of the Mysore army. The cavalry of that army, it is true, harried and worried Cornwallis in his advance, but these "harassing" operations were of a tactical and not a strategical nature, up to that moment when the British leader desired to communicate with and effect a junction with Abercromby's force. This junction the Mysore cavalry succeeded in preventing, and here the result was decidedly strategic and not tactical.

Apart from any other lessons which may be learnt from a study of the movements of this campaign, the particular principle, *that the best defence of a line of communications of an army lies in a vigorous offensive when the plan of operations is sound*, is well illustrated.

#### **A Raid Against a Line of Communications not a Strategic Stroke.**

A distinction must be drawn between a stroke against a line of communications the object of which is to produce a strategical result, and strokes which are of the nature of mere raids. The former are major operations which have decisive issues on the strategy of a campaign. The latter are minor operations which, though they cause great inconvenience, though they inflict great damage, and though they may, as in the case of the South African campaign, prolong operations

\* Authority : Hon. J. W. Fortescue, "History of the British Army."

out of all proportion to the actual effects of the raid, yet do not produce decisive results. To produce decisive strategical results, the stroke must be a real threat, carried out with forces numerically strong enough to meet and engage the enemy's forces, and with the intention, not of raiding the enemy's line of communications and then effecting a rapid escape, but of establishing itself on the line of communications for a more or less long period of time, and of frustrating all attempts of the enemy to regain his communications.

In mountain warfare, lines of communications are particularly weak, and require protection, not at certain points only, but throughout their whole length. For mountaineers, who can live on the country, who can travel comparatively long distances, and hide in secret gullies and ravines, known only to themselves, seize every opportunity of attacking the lines. The strategy of mountain warfare is one intimately connected with the protection of the lines of communications.

In the Tirah expedition, 1897, the line of communications of the army in Tirah (Maidan) with the advanced base in the Hangu valley was not a long line, but that line traversed three mountain ranges by the Chagru Kotal, the Sampagha, and the Arhanga passes, crossing two valleys, those of Khanki and Mastura. This line was the best available, but was liable to be raided. The construction of good roads, the establishment of fortified posts on the passes as well as in the two valleys, put a stop to the raids, but even up to the final withdrawal of the army from Tirah, the Afridis seized every opportunity of doing what damage they could. No convoy might pass without an escort, the more dangerous defiles had always to be piquetted as well, and no man could leave the limits of his camp, or stray a few yards from the road without the risk of being attacked. Every convoy, therefore, left camp at such an hour in the morning that its arrival at the next camping ground before dark was a matter of certainty.

#### **Changing the Lines of Communications.**

To possess the power of being able at will to change a line of communications, whether to avoid a disaster or to confirm a success, is of inestimable and untold advantage—an advantage which British armies, when the base of operations has been the sea coast, and when the British navy commands the sea, have employed with almost unvarying success. Sir John Moore's campaign in 1808-9 in the Peninsula, when the change of his line of communications and of retreat enabled him to save his army from destruction, and Wellington's campaign, 1813, when the change of his line of communications enabled him to supply his armies with greater ease, have already been quoted.

But to change a line of communications, even when such change has already been foreseen, and consequently either wholly or partly provided for, is a delicate and difficult operation, especially if in an enemy's country; and if that enemy be active and enterprising. But it will be one of far greater difficulty if it is a forced change; that is, one rendered necessary on account of a strategical or tactical success of the enemy. For in addition to the usual difficulties attending the operation, it will then probably be unexpected and therefore unprovided for.

Sir John Moore's change of his line of communications and line of retreat had been foreseen, and to a certain extent provided for, by that general. Nevertheless, the narrow margin by which the British army escaped destruction from the converging forces put in motion and led by Napoleon in person sufficiently illustrates the difficulty, nicety, and danger of the operation.

#### Abandoning a Line of Communications.

It was stated at the commencement of this chapter that, to modern civilised armies acting at a distance greater than one day's march from their base of operations, a line or lines of communications were an absolute necessity. This axiom holds good. Nevertheless there are many instances of armies having for days, and even weeks, cast themselves off entirely from their line of communications. But such cases must be considered as exceptions proving the rule. British campaigns, in Afghanistan especially, furnish brilliant examples, such as the two now to be cited, in which the rule has with success been broken.

#### AFGHAN WAR, 1879, SECOND PHASE. (MAP XI.)

In the second phase of the Afghan War, 1879, the force under the command of Sir Frederick Roberts marched from the Kurram Valley by way of the Shutar-gardan Pass to Kabul. Kushi, on the north or Kabul side of the pass, was reached by the advanced guard of the army on the 23rd September.

On October 6th was fought the battle of Charasiah, which cleared the way into Kabul.

On October 11th Kabul was occupied.

The garrison holding the Shutar-gardan Pass, which connected Kabul with the Kurram Valley, being surrounded and threatened by a large force of Ghilzais, a force under Sir Hugh Gough advanced from Kabul to its relief.

On the 20th October, on the approach of Sir Hugh Gough's force, the Ghilzais dispersed and fled.

On the 29th October the post on the Shutar-gardan Pass was withdrawn, part of the garrison returning into the valley of the Kurram, and part to Kabul.

By the withdrawal of the garrison at the Shutar-gardan

Pass, Sir Frederick Roberts had voluntarily given up his line of communications by the Kurram Valley back to Kohat and the Punjab. The British army at Kabul was then cut off from communication with India, but temporarily only, for on the 14th of November a brigade under General Macpherson completed connection with the army at Kabul and a force which had advanced through the Khyber, thus establishing a new line of communications with India.

SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS'S MARCH FROM KABUL TO KANDAHAR, 1880.  
(MAP XL.)

After the fall of Kabul, on the 9th October, Yakub Khan, the then Amir of Afghanistan, abdicated and was sent to India.

Sir Donald Stewart, in command of a division, leaving General Primrose in command of a British garrison at Kandahar, starting from Kandahar on the 30th March, reached Kabul on the 5th May, and took over command of the forces in northern Afghanistan.\* Abdur Rahman having been proclaimed Amir of Afghanistan at the end of July, 1880, orders were issued for the British troops to evacuate the country.

In the meantime, more or less unexpectedly, Ayub Khan on the 15th June had started from Herat in command of a force of 7,500 men and ten guns. Ayub Khan's first objective was the possession of Kandahar, and he knew that on his march to that place his comparatively small army would be strongly reinforced by tribesmen, levies and Ghazis. Yakub Khan's advance did not become known till the 27th of June. On the 4th July a brigade under command of General Burrows started from Kandahar to oppose his further advance.

On the 27th July the two forces came into contact at Maiwand, the Afghan forces reported to number 25,000 men.

General Burrows's force was badly beaten in the battle, those who escaped struggling back to Kandahar. The Afghan leader followed up his victory by an advance on Kandahar, where the British garrison were invested, and cut off from India.

For military and political reasons, the relief of Kandahar at once became of primary importance.

To mobilise the British garrisons in Sind and Beluchistan would have taken a long time. Besides, the garrisons were themselves weak in numbers, and there was no organised transport available. A long period would, therefore, necessarily elapse before forces adequate to the object in view could be set in motion.

\* Sir Donald Stewart's march from Kandahar to Kabul is also a case of abandoning one line of communications for another. The operation is referred to in greater detail in Part II., Chapter XII., in connection with abandoning a line of communications and a base and marching from one area of operations to another, and there establishing a new line of communications linking up with a new base.

The alternative which remained was to relieve the place by a British force from Kabul. But to do this involved weakening the army in northern Afghanistan; the march from Kabul to Kandahar would take from three to four weeks, during which time the relieving force would be cut off from all communication with India; it would, besides, be dependent for all warlike stores on what the force could actually carry with it, and for supplies of food partly on what, also, could be taken with it, and partly on the country it would be necessary to traverse. In spite of these difficulties this latter course was adopted, and though no determined opposition was anticipated, yet in Afghanistan, in particular, the unexpected might always happen, and had, therefore, to be taken into account.

The relieving force was entrusted to the command of Sir Frederiek Roberts, and numbered 9,986 fighting men, divided into three brigades of infantry, one brigade of cavalry, and three batteries mountain artillery (18 guns). There were, besides, over 8,000 followers and 2,300 horses and gun mules, exclusive of transport animals, which amounted to 8,676 ponies, mules, donkeys, and camels.

This force left Kabul on 9th August, and successfully reached Kandahar, a distance of 313 miles, on the 31st of the month. On the 1st of September was fought the battle of Kandahar, in which the Afghan forces, under Ayub Khan, were defeated. The victory of Kandahar not only ensured the relief of the place, but ended the war in Afghanistan.

This is a brilliant example of a comparatively large army cutting itself off from its base and all communications, undertaking a long and arduous march of 313 miles, which occupied a period of 23 days, and successfully putting a climax to that march by engaging and utterly routing the enemy.

## CHAPTER III.

### COMPELLING AN ENEMY TO FORM "FRONT TO FLANK."

Defensive Measures open to an Army whose Flanks are Threatened—Strategical and Tactical Flanks—Example of Compelling an Enemy to form Front to Flank: Campaign of Salamanca (1812)—Advantages of forming Front to Flank.

#### Defensive Measures open to an Army whose Flanks are Threatened.

An army operating on a front parallel to, or in prolongation of, the line by which it communicates with its base is said to have formed "front to flank." (See Plate I., Fig. 2.)

An army, whether on the march, in camp or bivouac, or in line of battle, has a front, a rear, and two flanks. It is obvious that if either flank of an army whose front is at right angles to its line of communications be seriously threatened, the army so situated must take some steps to ward off the impending blow on the threatened flank.

Three courses are open to the army situated as above, either of whose flanks are threatened:—

1. To change front to the threatened flank, that is, "form front to flank."

2. To retreat with all forces if time and opportunity permit.

3. By use of a "containing force," to (a) contain the enemy's attack, and retreat with remainder of forces till its flanks be secure; (b) contain the enemy's attack, and continue the advance on original objective.

Taking these courses in inverse order—

In 3 (a), if the containing force succeeds in containing the attack, the consequences of the blow are wholly, or to a degree, escaped.

3 (b) seems a bold and venturesome course, which would only be adopted in exceptional circumstances, when the probabilities are quite in favour of the containing force being successful, so affording opportunity to the main body of striking so decisive a blow elsewhere as to change the adverse conditions entirely in favour of the force whose flank is threatened.

2. If successful, the blow is escaped.

1. The army whose flank is threatened is usually forced to adopt this out of the three alternative courses given.

When the movement is completed the new line of front is either immediately on, or in prolongation of, the original line of advance. If the army, having completed this movement, advances in the direction of its new front, the new front will be parallel to the original line of advance.

See Plate III., Fig. 1, which illustrates a simple case.

If Blue is defeated, Blue is driven off his line of advance, and communications with his own original base point at A are lost.

But Blue may yet win the battle, in which case Red, if defeated, is driven off his original line of communications with his base point at c.

In this instance the advantages and disadvantages to both forces in the event of defeat are said to be "reciprocal," and for this reason: If Blue is defeated he is driven off his line of communications and away from his base, but being defeated in his own territory the difficulties of his position are much diminished. It will be in Blue's power to change his base and his line of retreat. The inhabitants of Blue territory will naturally give their own army (Blue) every assistance which it may be in their power to offer.

The same argument applies to the Red army if that army be defeated in battle.

In the case illustrated by Plate III., Fig. 2, the disadvantages in case of defeat are "not reciprocal." Here the operations take place entirely in Red's territory. Blue, if defeated, is driven off his line of communications with his own base, and is defeated in Red's territory. Defeat in this instance is usually disastrous, for Blue will experience great difficulty in the matter of supplies in Red territory.

On the other hand Red, if defeated, is driven back on his own line of communications, and not away from them. Moreover, Red is in his own country, and may retire in any direction, as towards A, say to some large town with plentiful supplies and capable of defence. Here he can concentrate his forces, reorganise his army, and be still in a good position to carry on the campaign. Red, too, may expect and rely on every assistance from the inhabitants of the district.

The consequences, then, in case of defeat to either, would be far more serious to Blue than to Red.\*

In applying the principle of compelling an enemy to form front to flank, three important points must be borne in mind:—

\* It must be noted, too, that in Fig. 1 both Red and Blue have formed "front to flank," but in Fig. 2, while Blue has formed "front to flank," Red's front is perpendicular to his line of advance.



Fig. 1

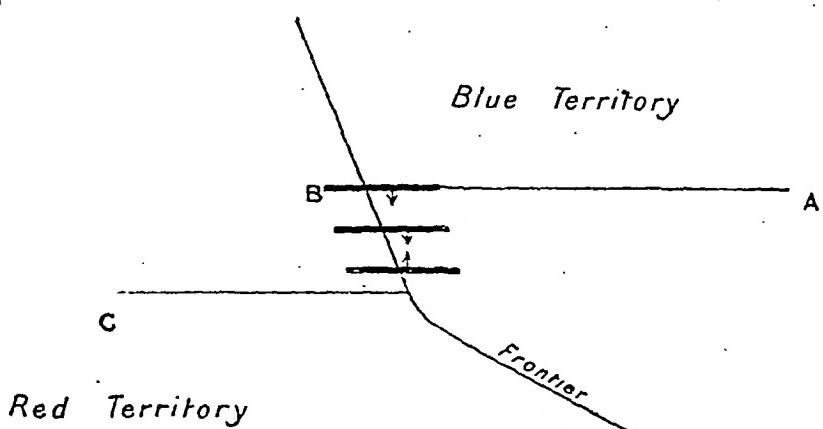
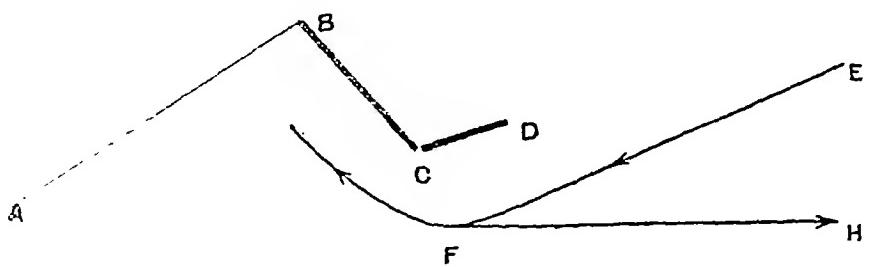
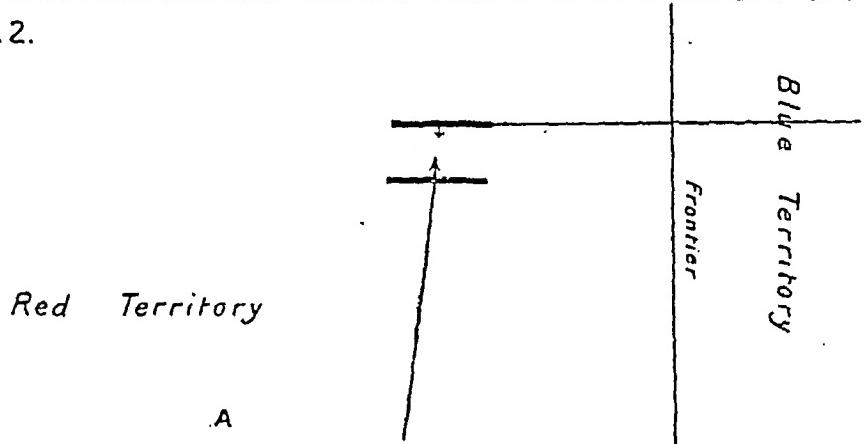


Fig. 2.



1. The enemy must be kept in ignorance as long as possible of the intention to strike against his flank.
2. The blow when delivered must be properly "timed."
3. The place of actual contact between the two forces with regard to the enemy's line of communications must be judiciously selected.

If the leader of an army acquire early information of his adversary's intention to aim at his flank he gains time. With time in his favour he may make such preparations to meet the threatened stroke as may entirely upset the calculations of his opponent.

For instance, with time in which to act—

(a) He may retreat, and avoid the blow altogether.

(b) If there be ground in the neighbourhood suitable for defence he may, having formed front to flank, decide on remaining where he is, and, having time, so strengthen and make secure his position as to defy his enemy to attack. Hence it is evident that a superior tactical position, the defence of which is properly conducted, may of itself be sufficient to negative the strategic stroke.

(c) He may, having formed front to flank, boldly advance to his new front and meet his enemy some marches distant from and beyond decisive striking distance of his own original line of advance. Should this be possible, time to change his line of communications, and his line of retreat in case of defeat, will also be available.

The general, then, who proposes to compel an enemy to form front to flank must keep that enemy unaware of his intentions and ignorant of his movements as long as possible, must time his blow at the right moment, and must make a judicious selection of the place of actual contact. Should he be so far successful, certainly nine out of ten points are in his favour. The enemy, to meet the threatened attack on the flank, must make a rapid and unexpected change of front, and can only trust to efficiency in tactics at the moment to supply deficiency in strategy.

Case c above quoted is contrary to the opinion put forth by Hamley in the third of his "assumptions as a step towards future investigation." Hamley assumes that "the distance of the front of the army from its parallel line of communications, when the front is extended and when the space between it is devoid of defensible positions, does not prevent, but only postpones the catastrophe."

Everything in this assumption depends upon the interpretation put on the words "distance" and "postpone." Does the former mean a distance "within" or "beyond" striking distance of the line of communications, and what limit of time is to be placed upon the word "postpone"?

If any army which has formed "front to flank" be immediately on, in prolongation of, or parallel to, but *within* striking distance of its line, then the same stroke which defeats that army brings the antagonist making the stroke on the line of communications, and the consequences of defeat are usually fatal.

But if the army which has formed front to flank with time in its favour succeeds in advancing to a distance from—the word "distance" being interpreted as *beyond* striking distance from—its line of communications, even though "the space between it be devoid of defensible positions," then its defeat does not place its antagonist on its line of communications. He has still to reach it, and while doing so the defeated army may recover itself. This will depend to a great extent on the character of the pursuit, whether energetically carried out or otherwise. But a battle fought for the protection of a bad strategical position is certain to be fierce and obstinate, and it might well happen that the losses incurred by the attack might be so great as to render an immediate and vigorous strategic pursuit impossible.

But the mere fact of an army having formed front to flank parallel to, but beyond striking distance of, its line of communications usually compels the leader of the army so operating to change his line. If not, he will be operating by two sides of a triangle, namely, his original line, and the new line which connects the new front with the old line.

If the front of the army which has been compelled to "form front to flank" be extended, and if the front of the adversary also be extended, then the disadvantages to both armies, *with respect to extension of front only*, are equal.

If the front of the army which has been compelled to form "front to flank" be concentrated, the enemy must concentrate to attack with any chance of success. The time required for this concentration may be advantageously employed by the army which has formed "front to flank" in tactically strengthening its position, or in retreat from that position, in either of which events the full consequences of the enemy's attack are averted or altogether avoided.

On the other hand, if the army which has compelled its opponent to "form front to flank" be concentrated while that of the opponent be extended, the issue may depend upon whether the attack be directed against the centre or flank of the enemy whose front is extended. If against the centre, the army whose front is extended is certainly in an unfavourable position. But if against the flank, if the attack can only be contained for so great a period as to permit of the concentration of the remainder, that remainder may be enabled to fall with disastrous effects on the flank of the concentrated army.

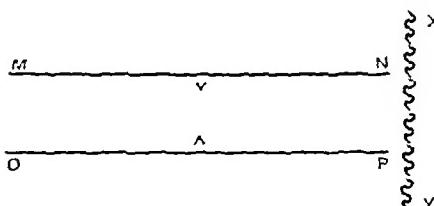
### Strategical and Tactical Flanks.

The attack on the flank of an army in any position may have two separate results, namely, a strategical result or a tactical result. Hence arise two expressions used both in strategy and tactics, namely, a "strategical flank" and a "tactical flank." As is implied by these expressions, a successful attack on a strategic flank will obtain a successful strategical result: a successful attack on a tactical flank will obtain a successful tactical result.

The same flank may or may not be both the tactical and strategical flank. This will depend to a certain extent upon the respective battle fronts of the two armies; to a greater extent upon the nature and character of the ground upon which the flanks rest.

These remarks are especially applicable in the case in which an army has formed "front to flank." The inner flank of an army which has formed "front to flank" will always be the "strategical" flank, for an enemy defeated on that flank will be driven off, and away from its lines of communications. An army in similar circumstances, if defeated on the outer flank, would be driven rather towards its lines of communications, and might cover and regain them.

If the case be supposed of two armies facing each other as M N and O P in the accompanying figure, and if the inner flanks of both armies N and P rest on an impassable obstacle X Y, such as an unfordable river, or the frontier of some neutral state, then the outer flanks of each army M and O are the strategic flanks, for either army if defeated at M or O is liable to be forced back



on the impassable obstacle. In this case, too, the outer flanks would also be the tactical flanks, for the inner flanks, resting on, and therefore presumably protected by, an obstacle are likely to be strong.

In the figure, if X Y be the sea coast, if a stream be imagined as running between the two armies, and if the army at O P be supported by a fleet, then the position is roughly that of the allied French, Turkish, and British forces at the battle of the Alma, the line M N representing the Russian and O P the Allied forces. In this instance M, the outer flank, is again the

strategical flank of the Russian army, for if defeated at  $\mathbf{m}$  the Russian army would be driven against the coast, and its lines of communications intercepted. But the outer flank  $\mathbf{o}$  is not the strategical flank of the allied forces; for defeat on this flank would drive the army on to their base, the sea coast. The inner flank at  $\mathbf{P}$  is evidently the strategical flank, for defeat here would drive the army away from its base, the sea coast. The inner flank, though the strategical, is not in this case the tactical flank. That flank is evidently the outer flank at  $\mathbf{o}$ , for the inner flank  $\mathbf{P}$ , resting on the coast and protected and supported by the guns of the fleet, is exceptionally strong.

**Example of Successfully Compelling an Enemy to form Front to Flank ; Good Strategy, however, being Ruined by Bad Tactics.**

CAMPAIGN OF SALAMANCA, JULY, 1812. (MAP VII.)

*General Situation.*

In July, 1812, the allied army under Wellington, and the French army under Marmont, confronted each other on the line of the River Douro.

Wellington's right was posted at Rueda; his left on the River Guarena.

Marmont's right extended from Toro, on the River Douro, to the River Pisuerga.

The line of communications of the allied army, with the base in Portugal, lay through Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo. The French line of communications with France was by way of Valladolid and Burgos. Thus each army covered its line of communications. Wellington depended upon Portugal for reinforcements, general refitment, and supplies; and Marmont, upon France for general refitment and reinforcements, but *not* for supplies of food, for "the French army from its peculiar organisation could, while the ground harvest lasted, operate without any regard to lines of communications; it procured its food everywhere; the troops were taught to reap the standing corn, and grind it themselves, if their cavalry could not seize flour in the villages. This organisation, approaching the ancient Roman military perfection, gave them great advantages; it baffled the irregular, and threw the regular force of the Allies entirely upon the defensive, for if their flanks were turned, a retreat only could save the communications, but the French offered no point for retaliation."\*

The French forces actually at Marmont's disposal numbered about 45,000 men and 100 guns. In addition, he was expecting

\* Alison, "History of Europe."

a reinforcement of horsemen under Clausel, and King Joseph, from Madrid, was to co-operate with a force of 14,000 men.

The British general hoped that a diversion on the east coast of Spain would be made by the landing on that coast of troops from Sicily under Lord William Bentinck, which would have had the effect of holding Suchet on the east, and probably have compelled King Joseph to detach a considerable portion of his army to that general's assistance.

#### *Movements.*

On the 15th and 16th July, Marmont assumed the initiative by commencing the passage of the Douro at Toro. Wellington conformed by uniting his centre and left at Canizal, on the River Guarena, but suspicious of the French general's intentions, he kept his right on the River Trabancos.

Having crossed at Toro, Marmont "had turned Wellington's left, and by persisting in an advance from Toro upon Salamanca he would reach that place as soon as his adversary. Wellington must therefore break through or be lost, they would form in order of battle to meet him, and the fronts of both armies would be parallel to the road from Toro to Salamanca. Both armies would be in a flank position—either would be ruined by defeat. A French victory would cut Wellington from Portugal, and throw him back upon the Castilian mountains and the army of King Joseph. An English victory would cut Marmont from Toro, and drive him back on the Douro, and the difficult hostile country of the Tras-os-Montes."<sup>\*</sup>

To operate by Wellington's left was, however, not Marmont's intention. During the night of the 16th he countermarched with all his forces, withdrawing even those troops that had already crossed the River Douro at Toro.

On the morning of the 17th Marmont reached Pollos and Tordesillas, crossed the Douro at those places, and before nightfall had concentrated the bulk of his forces at and in the neighbourhood of Nava del Rey.<sup>†</sup> Wellington did not hear of Marmont's second turning movement till the night of the 17th-18th, when he hastened to the River Trabancos in person, but the line of this river was too far distant to expect reinforcements from his centre to arrive in time to oppose Marmont's passage.

On the morning of the 18th, Marmont crossed the river, and turning the left flank of the allied right wing, marched straight upon the River Guarena. The British army likewise retired upon the river, moving by way of Torcilla de la Orden.

\* Napier, "History of the War in the Peninsula."

† Hamley, "Operations of War," Part III., Chapter III. This was magnificent marching. Some of the divisions of the French had covered 40 to 50 miles without a longer halt than a few hours.

Both forces were now marching in parallel columns, "at only half-musket shot from each other," towards a common goal. Marmont attempted to cross the River Guarena at Castrillo and Valeya, but was foiled at both places; for Wellington, anticipating his movements, had occupied Castrillo and the high ground of Valeya by troops drawn from Canizal.

On the 19th, the two armies remained in their respective positions, each again covering their lines of communications. On the evening of this day Marmont commenced a concentration on his left, near Tarazona.

On the 20th, Marmont moving rapidly by his left crossed the River Guarena at Cantalapiedra, by this movement turning the right flank of the allies.

Wellington, obliged to conform, endeavoured to anticipate and cross Marmont's line of advance at Cantalpino. Both armies were again striving for the same objective, and were again marching in parallel columns within musket-shot of each other. The French, however, kept the lead, and Wellington, foiled in making Cantalpino, directed his march upon the heights of Cabeca Vellosa and Aldea Rubia, and not imagining that the French would that day make any effort to seize the ford of Huerta, made no plans for its defence. Alba, higher up the Tormes, had previously been, and Wellington remained, under the impression that it still was occupied by a Spanish garrison. The Spanish commander had, however, abandoned the place without informing Wellington, "a matter soon to prove of infinite importance."

On the 21st Marmont, still moving by his left, occupied Alba, and passed the River Tormes by fords between that place and Huerta.

Wellington on the same day also passed the Tormes with the greater part of his forces by the fords at Santa Marta and Aldea Lengua. He took post with the army covering Salamanca, his left on the River Tormes, his right resting on two isolated hills called the Arapiles. This line was perpendicular to the course of the river at that point; it was parallel to, and in advance of, the road leading from Salamanca to Ciudad Rodrigo, that is, his line of communications.

Marmont had therefore compelled Wellington to "form front to flank." His own line back to France, by continually manoeuvring by his left, was also uncovered, and if he were to form for attack, he too would be "front to flank" with regard to that line. But the positions were not reciprocal. Wellington, if driven off the Salamanca-Ciudad Rodrigo road, had no line of retreat open to him, whereas Marmont had two divergent lines, one to Madrid, held by King Joseph, and a second to Valladolid and Burgos.

On this day, the 21st, King Joseph set out from Madrid with 14,000 men to co-operate with Marmont. On this day, too, Marmont learnt that Clausel with 2,000 horse and 20 guns had reached Pollos, and would join him on the 22nd or 23rd.

So far Marmont had done exceedingly well. He had outmanœuvred and out-marched Wellington, but he now made a mistake in strategy. "Nothing could prevent the junction of these formidable additions with the French army; and it was obviously, therefore, the policy of its general to remain on the defensive, and shun a general engagement till they had arrived. But in this decisive moment the star of England prevailed. Marmont was aware that he would be superseded in his command by the arrival of Joseph or of Jourdan, the senior marshal in Spain: the retreat of Wellington, and his declining to attack when formerly in position at San Christoval, had inspired the French general with a mistaken idea of his character; and he now openly aspired to the glory, before his reinforcements came up, of forcing the English army to evacuate Salamanca, or possibly gaining a decisive victory, and snatching from the brows of its general the laurels of Busaco and Torres Vedras."

On the 22nd, Marmont, having gained one of the Arapiles, continued his movement by his left towards the Ciudad Rodrigo road. Wellington, to meet this move, was obliged to reverse his whole position. What was formerly his right on the Arapiles, now became his left on that hill, whilst his original left now became his right, resting at Aldea Tejada on the Ciudad Rodrigo road. Marmont, seeing the dust raised by the commissariat and baggage on that road, thought the English were certainly in retreat. He hastened on his movements, and now committed a mistake in tactics; for the left wing, carrying out his instructions, moved so rapidly in its advance towards the Ciudad Rodrigo road as to become entirely separated from the centre and right wings. Wellington perceived the error and overwhelmed the wing. Marmont, too, saw the fault, but too late to rectify it. He was soon afterwards wounded. The French centre made an obstinate resistance, which was of no avail. As darkness set in, the French were in full retreat to the Tormes. Wellington, still under the impression that Alba was held by the Spaniards, directed the pursuit to Huerta, hoping to cut off the enemy at the fords at that place.\*

But the French, directing their retreat towards Alba, crossed the Tormes there, practically unmolested, and Wellington was thus deprived of the full fruits of his victory. Clausel, assuming command of the French retreat, moved first to Valladolid and thence

\* French forces in battle, 42,000 men and 74 guns; allied forces, 46,000 men and 60 guns.

to Burgos. Wellington followed in pursuit as far as Valladolid, thence he turned back to meet Joseph, who on the 24th had reached Blasco Sancho. Joseph, his forces being quite unequal to engage Wellington with any prospect of success, retired first to Madrid and thence through Toledo southwards into Andalusia, and Wellington entered the Spanish capital in triumph on July 12th.

### Remarks.

The French compelled the British general to "form front to flank." In carrying out the manœuvre the French army became so situated that its front was in continuation of the general direction of its lines of communications. Both armies in the first phase of the battle were "formed front to flank." But the positions were *not* reciprocal, for whilst the allied army was tied to its line connecting it with the frontier of Portugal, so that a defeat would have driven the army off and away from its line of communications, the French army possessed alternative lines of communications and of retreat, either due east, or on King Joseph advancing from Madrid to reinforce Marmont.

Plate III., Fig. 3, is a rough illustration of the lines of communications and of retreat of the two armies, and their respective fronts of battle.

Wellington's first position, C D, is in advance of, within striking distance of, and parallel with his communications, B A, with Portugal. Compelled by Marmont's continued advance on the line F E, Wellington changed his battle front from the first position C D to his second position C B. This position was strategically worse than the first, for his front now faced towards his line of communications, B A, which was also his line of retreat, in case of defeat, and this important line was now entirely uncovered.

Marmont, persisting in his advance, E F, made a flank march in front, and within striking distance, of the allied position C B. His advance guard, leading too fast, outstripped the main body. Wellington at once took advantage of this error in tactics. He overwhelmed the advanced guard, and penetrating the tactical interval of the French column, drove back the main body, which retreated on the line F H.

Good strategy will lessen and diminish the consequences of a tactical defeat, but bad tactics may entirely negative all the advantages to be derived from superior strategy.

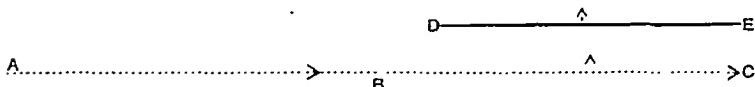
The battle of Vimiera, 21st August, 1808, in which both the English and French forces formed "front to flank," illustrates the case in which the positions of both armies were reciprocal. Junot, in command of the French forces, being defeated, was driven off the line which connected him with Torres Vedras and Lisbon. Had Sir Harry Burrard, who took over the command

of the British forces after the battle, followed Sir Arthur Wellesley's advice and advanced at once to Lisbon, Junot would have been cut off from the Portuguese capital. Wellington's plan was not adopted, and Junot, with great difficulty, and with a part only of his forces, succeeded in regaining Lisbon. On the other hand, had Wellington been defeated, the line which connected his army with the mouth of the Mondego river—his base point, and the place of disembarkation of his army—would have been cut by a forward movement of the French right. In which case Wellington would have been driven back on the sea.

#### **Advantages of Forming Front to Flank.**

But though the drawbacks of forming front to flank are shown to be great, there are, given certain favourable conditions, positive advantages to be derived from this strategic formation.

If  $A B C$  be the line of communications of an army which,



having advanced to  $C$ , changes direction, and forms "front to flank" on the line  $D E$ , the army at  $D E$  is very favourably situated as regards convenience and facility of distribution of supplies, and if the safety of that part of the line of communications  $A B$  is ensured, the danger of forming front to flank is much diminished, if not avoided altogether.

An example of this is furnished by the Crimean campaign, where the French lines of supply ran roughly parallel to and in rear of their forces engaged in the siege of Sevastopol.

But a much more notable example is that furnished by the operations of Wellington for the invasion of France after the complete defeat of the French at the battle of Vitoria. Wellington's base of operations was the north coast of Spain, and his forces were supplied from ports on that coast.

His front of operations extended from the mouth of the Bidassoa river on the left, to Pampeluna on the right. The line by which his army was supplied, starting from the Spanish ports on the north coast of Spain, ran in rear of, and roughly parallel to, that line. Wellington's forces were then formed front to flank. Soult, who had just arrived from Germany to take command of the French forces, defended the French frontier, and his front extended along the north bank of the Bidassoa river, through the mountains to St. Jean Pied de Port, on his left. His base of operations was practically France, which lay behind him. If Soult could, either by stratagem or by force, break through on the left flank of Wellington's line, the British

army would be somewhat dangerously situated, cut off as it would then have been from their ports of supply. But Wellington was fully alive to this fact, and very jealously guarded and watched his left flank. So well was this duty performed that the French general's stroke was delivered, not at the allied left, but at their right flank, with the object of there breaking through, raising the blockade of Pampeluna, turning Wellington's line, and taking the British forces engaged in besieging San Sebastian in rear. He, though at one moment near to success, failed. Wellington's troops in the mountains maintained their positions, and being aided by a timely reinforcement, Soult, in the end, was repulsed all along the line; his troops were driven back through the passes, and but for the unfortunate appearance of three British soldiers, whose presence revealed the close proximity of one of Wellington's divisions, one of Soult's retreating columns would have been cut off and compelled to surrender.

## CHAPTER IV.

### INTERIOR VERSUS EXTERIOR LINES.

Application of the Principle must be Considered under Three Aspects—An Army may Cover a Point or Area either Directly or Indirectly—General Remarks regarding the Application of the Principle—Distinction between the Concentration of two Separated Forces *beyond* and *within* striking distance of the Enemy—Use and Value of “Containing” Forces—Turning and Flanking Movements—Why Armies Operate by “Double Exterior” Lines—Variations of the Principle of Interior *versus* Exterior Lines—Examples—Campaign ending with Siege and Fall of Seringapatam, 1799—Egyptian Campaign, 1801—Masséna’s Invasion of Portugal, 1810.

#### Application of the Principle must be Considered under Three Aspects.

THE principle of the strategic manœuvre defined as interior *versus* exterior lines has been generally described in Chapter I., but the principle must be considered under three aspects, namely :—

1. Its application with regard to the attack or defence of a particular point.
2. Its application with regard to movements of concentration of separated fractions of an army for the purpose of giving battle, without special regard to the attack or defence of any particular point or area.
3. A combination of the above two aspects; that is, its application with respect to the attack or defence of a particular point or area, when the operation includes the concentration of separated fractions of an army for that purpose.

As regards 1, the attack or defence of a particular point, when the immediate objective of two armies may be the attack or defence of a known or definite point or area, as Lessines in the march of Vendôme and Marlborough towards that place.

As regards 2, because though the ultimate objective may be the possession or conquest of a point or area, as the attack and defence of Lisbon was the ulterior objective of both Masséna and Wellington in the invasion of Portugal (1810), described in outline hereafter, yet the immediate objective of both generals was the *concentration* of the separated forces of their respective

armies, Masséna on the line which might offer the best chances of success, while the object of Wellington (the initiative being with Masséna) was to concentrate his forces (separated for the defence of the various possible lines of invasion open to Masséna) at any point at which it might be suitable to offer battle on whatever line Masséna might select as his line of invasion.

Let  $x\gamma$  (Plate IV., Fig. 1) represent the strategic point, or area, defended by Red. If the Red army be at any point A, B, C or D, it is on interior lines with respect to any force of the enemy at  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$  or  $d$ . For Red can interpose for the defence at any point on the line  $x\gamma$  before Blue can reach  $x\gamma$ . This equally applies if Red be at A and Blue at d, or Red at C and Blue at a, etc. The diagram represents one force on interior lines with respect to a particular point or area.

Plate I., Figs. a and b (3), refer to movements of concentration.

#### An Army may Cover a Point or Area either Directly or Indirectly.

The principle of "interior" as against "exterior" lines with reference to any point is simple, and merely amounts to this—that an army in any position not only directly covers the ground on which it stands, and that to its rear, but also indirectly covers, or defends, any other point which may be threatened by an enemy if it can interpose for its defence before the enemy can reach the point.

A point is covered *directly* if the covering army be interposed between the enemy and the objective point of that enemy.

A point is covered *indirectly* (1) if the covering army from any point can anticipate and interpose between the enemy and its objective point; (2) if the covering army actually is, or may be, so posted that the enemy must, before it can continue its advance on its objective point, first turn aside and defeat it.

If one army be advancing along the line A B (Plate IV., Fig. 2) towards its objective point o, its adversary posted at c would be directly covering o.

A Red army posted at any point E would indirectly cover o, if from E it could interpose between Blue and o as at c.

Red on a flank position as at d would also indirectly cover o, for Blue could not continue his advance along the line A B towards o without first disposing of Red at d. A force indirectly defending an objective point from a flank position, as Red at d, may or may not be on interior lines as regards the line of attack of the enemy. Whether it was or not would depend on its actual position with regard to the threatened objective and the line of attack.



Fig. 1.

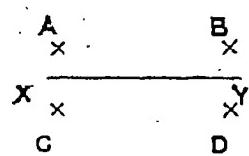
 $\times a$  $\times b$  $\times c$  $\times d$ 

Fig. 2

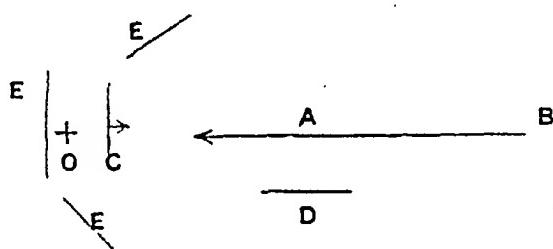


Fig. 3

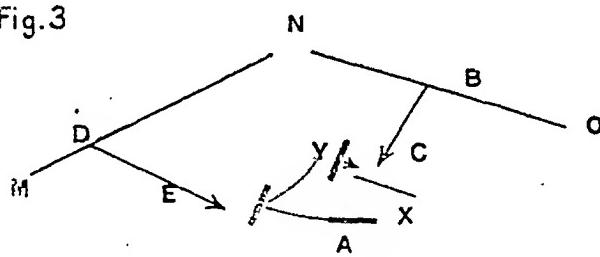
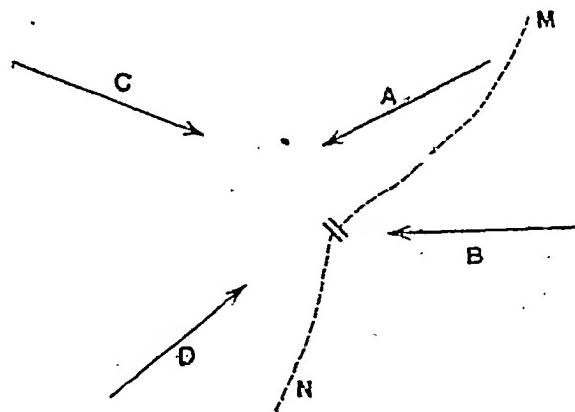


Fig. 4.



### General Remarks regarding the Application of the Principle.

Plate IV., Fig. 3, illustrates a force on a defensive interior line as against an enemy on *double* exterior lines operating from divergent bases.

A is Blue's objective point. Blue elects to advance on that objective by the double exterior lines B C, D E, operating from the two bases, X O, M N. It may then happen that it will be within the power of Red from his interior and central position at A—and such instances have frequently occurred in military operations—to fall on either of the enemy's separated forces, say Blue at E, defeat it, and yet return in time either to interpose, directly as at X, between A and the column not attacked; or to defend A indirectly by placing himself on the flank of Blue as at Y, or even to strike at his line of communications.

When opposed to superior forces operating by double or more exterior offensive lines, to act on a single or simple defensive interior line is safest. This method of operating offers greater chances of success, whilst if unsuccessful the consequences of failure and defeat are much diminished.

An army on a "single defensive interior" line, as against an adversary on "exterior lines," possesses the advantage of acting with its force concentrated, and by alternately moving against the separated fractions of the enemy's forces a chance is afforded of beating those forces in detail.

When operating on double interior lines, whether offensive or defensive, two important considerations must be borne in mind.

1. The forces on interior lines must not manœuvre in too confined an area, with regard to the numbers of their own forces and the forces on exterior lines opposed to them. For if so, opportunities will be offered to the separated forces of the enemy to combine and operate simultaneously, in which case the advantage of interior lines will be entirely lost. The enemy may crush the "interior" force by opposing it in front and at the same time attacking it in flank or rear. It will run the risk of being overwhelmed.

2. Neither on the other hand must the interior lines be too far separated from each other, for then one separated fraction may be defeated before the other can arrive to its assistance. An unexpected movement, a sudden night march, or greater mobility, and the enemy may interpose between the separated fractions of the force on interior lines. The whole advantage of the position will have been lost.

In selecting the proper mean of the two extremes lies the art of the general.

When an army operates by double interior lines, offensive or defensive, though the ultimate objective may be the attack or defence of a strategic point or area, yet the primary object to be gained is the concentration of the separated fractions of the army. To succeed in the primary object—that is, to concentrate first, to follow up the concentration by first reaching the objective, and then to deliver battle against a separated fraction of the enemy's forces—is the highest form of this principle of strategic manœuvre.

When two or more fractions of an army are on separate lines, with a view either to concentrate or to defend or attack a strategic point, or to combine both objects, then the time taken to concentrate, or to reach the desired point or both, must be considered, and not the distance. For instance (Plate IV., Fig. 4), two columns A and B of a Red army, separated by 15 miles, are operating against two columns C and D of a Blue army, separated by 30 miles. Red desires to effect a concentration and fall upon C, one of the separated columns of Blue. If the ground be favourable and good roads exist, A and B will be able to effect the necessary concentration and fall upon C (Blue) before D can reach C, to take part in the battle. But if the ground between Red's separated columns A and B be unfavourable, or if, in order to concentrate, one of Red's columns has to cross a river by a single bridge, or traverse a mountain defile (see dotted line M N), it may well happen that Blue, though the distance which separates his two columns be twice as great as that which separates Red's two columns, may effect a concentration before Red.

It is *time* therefore which must be taken into account, and not distance only; and time and space together are two factors which must be considered in every strategic combination.

Rapidity of movement—mobility—is also of extreme importance in every operation of war, but especially so in the case of an army acting on interior as against an enemy acting on exterior lines. It will profit nothing being on interior lines as to position if the movements of the army, initially so advantageously placed, be eventually so slow that it is outmarched and outmanœuvred by an opponent.

Thus in July, 1708, Vendôme, desiring to take up a position at Lessines in order to cover a proposed siege of Oudenarde, set out from Alost and moved up the river Dender towards Lessines, breaking the bridges of the river behind him. Marlborough guessed his intention, but dared not for the moment leave Assche, where he was posted, for fear of uncovering Brussels. By the time Vendôme's design became apparent, not only had he gained the advantage of an earlier start, but Lessines, his objective, was nearer to him than to Marl-

borough; but the latter's subsequent operations were so rapid that although moving by the "curve of an arc, he outmarched Vendôme on the chord," and so not only anticipated the French General at Lessines, but interposed between him and his own frontier.

On March 9th, 1803, Sir Arthur Wellesley, with 2,000 Mysore horse and 10,000 British and Native infantry, broke up from Hurryhur and crossed the Toongabudra River, his eventual objective being Poona, towards which city his advance was generally directed. Becoming "aware of the importance of gaining possession of the capital before Scindiah could assemble forces for its relief, or the threats of burning it, which they (Scindiah and Holkar) had uttered, could be executed, [Wellesley] put himself at the head of the cavalry, and, advancing by forced marches, reached Poona on April 19th, and entered the city amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, whom, by an extraordinary effort, he had saved from the vengeance of a retiring enemy. In the thirty-two hours immediately preceding he had marched at the head of his horse above sixty miles—an instance of sustained effort, under the burning sun of India, which has never been exceeded in history."\*

These are two examples only, out of many which might be quoted, illustrating the fact that superior mobility, on the part of an army on exterior lines, will compensate for disadvantage of position. In both the instances quoted, the initial advantage as to position lay respectively with Vendôme and the Mahrattas, who were on interior lines with regard to their respective objectives, Lessines and Poona, and in both cases the forces on interior lines lost the advantage of position, not so much on account of the dilatoriness of their own operations, but owing to the rapidity of movement of their opponents.

#### **Distinction between Concentration of two Separated Forces *beyond and within* striking distance of the Enemy.**

Two separated forces converging towards a strategic objective which it is the intention of the enemy to defend by offering battle may—

(1) Unite beyond striking distance of the enemy before contact takes place; or

(2) Unite within striking distance of the enemy, or on the actual field of battle.

So far, all that has been said refers primarily to the first of the two alternatives above mentioned, and this method is the more preferable of the two in that it is safer, for the junction of two forces on the site of contact, or within striking distance of an

\* Alison, "History of Europe."

enemy posted at or near that site, is a very hazardous operation of war and one not as a rule resorted to from choice. The possibility of being able to unite two divided forces on a field of battle is absolutely dependent upon secure, constant, and rapid communications. Bad roads, bad weather, the destruction of a bridge, a block on the railways, failures in communication, mistakes on the part of subordinate commanders, are all factors which have to be reckoned with when the strategic plan involves the junction of two separate forces on the field of battle, or within striking distance of the enemy. A false reliance upon any of the above factors, or the failure of one factor to play its allotted part in the combination, may ruin the whole of the movements in contemplation. And these essential factors cannot be relied upon even in these days of railways, telegraph, and wireless telegraphy. Yet when circumstances happen to be so favourable that the desired result—a junction of two separated forces on the site of contact—can be effected, the consequences are attended as a rule with more success than to unite first, for such a junction will probably be unexpected by the enemy, and will therefore be of the nature of a surprise, and may force him at the last moment to alter all his dispositions for delivering the impending battle, or compel a change whilst the battle is actually being fought. “In future, this will be one of the resources of the great general—to bring about, unknown to his enemy, combinations of forces from different points which will unite in the battlefield for a common object.”\*

The Battle of Waterloo is a case in point. Napoleon made all his dispositions in the first instance for an attack on Wellington alone. He held in reserve till past noon a force numbering 15,000 men, which up to that time had not been engaged. But as the day drew on and the turning movement of the Prussians under Blücher became more pronounced and certain, this reserve had to be diverted to hold the Prussians in check. What the consequences would have been had Blücher not appeared, in which case Napoleon would have been able, towards the latter part of the afternoon, to put into his line of battle a fresh force of so great a strength against Wellington’s worn-out troops, must for ever remain an unsolved problem.

A second instance of the successful junction of two separate forces in the field of battle is the Vitoria Campaign, 1813, with which the reader is already familiar, when Graham’s army on the field of battle practically first united with Wellington’s main army, and, coming down on the French right and right rear, drove Reille away, and thereby greatly contributed to the victory and the after consequences, the fruits of that success.

\* “Modern Strategy,” Captain W. H. James, 1904.

**Use and Value of "Containing" Forces.**

If two separated fractions of an army can effect a junction so speedily as to have time and opportunity to engage one of the separated fractions of an enemy's forces before the other fraction can possibly arrive to its assistance, then the conditions for applying the principle of double interior lines against double exterior lines are extremely favourable, for the whole of the forces on interior lines can be employed in delivering the necessary stroke against one fraction of its opponent's separated forces. But the conditions are not usually so favourable. In order, therefore, to prevent the possibility of the separated fraction of the enemy not attacked coming to the assistance of the fraction which is attacked, it becomes necessary to employ a "containing" force, whose duty it is to prevent the two separated fractions from joining forces.

Let the case be assumed of an army, whose total numbers amount to 70,000 men, on double interior lines, pitted against a superior force of 100,000 men on double exterior lines, 50,000 men being on each line.

If the inferior force places half its numbers on each line, nothing will have been gained. But if it places 10,000 to 15,000 men on one line to contain one of the columns consisting of 50,000 men, and opposes the other column of 50,000 men with the remainder, the probabilities of success on that particular line will be in its favour, for the weaker force, inferior on the whole in numbers, will be fighting one separated column of the enemy, with superiority of numbers in its favour, an obvious advantage in so far as numbers will affect the issue. The duty devolving upon the commander of the containing force is clear and his responsibility great. His sole object is to prevent the separated fraction of the enemy to which he is immediately opposed from effecting a junction with the other separated fraction. A proper selection of the ground upon which the operations will take place is of supreme importance, for it is evident that the containing force will be much assisted by natural or artificial obstacles, or both. If one of the columns acting on double exterior lines has, in order to effect a junction with the other, to force its way over a mountain barrier or to cross a river, or if its path be barred by a fortress or entrenched position, then the difficulties offered by the defile or the fortified position will manifestly much assist the duty of the containing force, and it is for this reason that an army acting on interior lines will always seek, if possible, to post its containing force on an obstacle, for the purpose of denying its passage to the enemy.

The success of a force on interior lines is to a great extent dependent upon the correct appreciation of his duties of the officer commanding the containing force.

### Turning and Flanking Movements.

The reader, when noting the five principles of strategic manœuvre commented on in Chapter I., may have asked himself why no mention was made of turning or flanking movements. A turning or flanking movement is certainly a strategic manœuvre; and the reply to the question is that all turning or flanking operations are neither more nor less than exterior or interior lines with regard to the objective in view, whether that objective be the enemy's army in the field, or a geographical point or area. The movement ultimately may develop and end in any one of the stated five principles of strategic manœuvre, but in its initial stages it will fall under the principle now discussed. This is so evident as to call for no further remarks.

#### CAMPAIGN OF BLENHEIM: INSTANCE OF A FLANK MOVEMENT.

One of the most brilliant flank marches ever conducted to a successful issue was Marlborough's celebrated march from the Netherlands to the Danube in his campaign of 1704. Marlborough's march was a turning movement along the whole strategic flank and front of the French armies. The French could have interposed between Marlborough and his objective, the upper valley of the Danube, had they penetrated his real design, but only a few persons besides the British general knew of his intentions, and the secret was well kept. The march was unopposed. Marlborough not only reached, but crossed the Danube, and levied military contributions right up to the walls of the Bavarian capital, before Tallard, the French general, emerging from the defiles of the Black Forest, caused Prince Eugène to fall back. Then the Elector of Bavaria joined forces with Tallard. Marlborough and Eugène in their turn united their forces, and there followed the battle and brilliant victory of Blenheim, one of the fifteen decisive battles of the world.

Napoleon was a great admirer of Marlborough. He considered him one of the greatest of all generals, and studied closely all his campaigns. Napoleon's Ulm campaign of 1805 was modelled on this of Marlborough's.

The value of time and of rapidity of movement—mobility—in every operation of war has already been commented upon, and with reference to Marlborough's campaign on the Danube, a third factor of importance is especially marked, namely, the advantages which may be derived from successfully concealing one's designs from an opponent up to the last possible moment.

When Marlborough decided to make the upper valley of the Danube his objective he was on exterior lines with regard to that objective as compared with the armies of France, which, had

their leaders but penetrated Marlborough's design, might, as has already been noted, have interposed directly or indirectly for the defence of the valley. But they failed to discover Marlborough's real intentions, and it is to this fact chiefly that the success of his march must be attributed.

Prior to Vendôme setting out on his march to Lessines (see *ante*, page 68) Marlborough had accurately guessed his design, and had directed the Governor of Ath to reinforce Oudenarde, which orders had been carried out. Vendôme, already on interior lines, started on his march to Lessines, moving before Marlborough, and so gained a second advantage; but Marlborough, knowing the French general's objective to be Lessines, marched also for that place, and so rapid was his rate of marching that in spite of the two disadvantages noted he forestalled Vendôme at the common objective.

#### Why Armies Operate by "Double Exterior" Lines.

- If the advantage of interior lines against double exterior lines be so great, why do armies ever operate on double exterior lines? The answer is that armies usually act on double exterior lines from necessity, and not from choice. If an army beyond a certain strength acts on one line only, then the time taken to deploy for battle will be so great that it would be impossible to put all disposable troops into line of battle. But it is an established maxim of war to employ all available troops in action, otherwise a superior army may risk being beaten in detail. Consequently, in order to deploy all his available forces, a commander will advance by more roads than one. This advance by double lines not only diminishes the length of the columns and increases the rapidity of marching, but also facilitates supply. To advance, then, on double lines when each column is within supporting distance of the other is sound strategy. Unfortunately, the nature of the country to be traversed, the direction of the roads and railways, and the conformation of the base line from which the armies set out, will not always permit of an advance of double or more columns within supporting distance of each other. The question, therefore, resolves itself into a choice between two evils. If the whole army be concentrated in one column, that column may have to fight a decisive battle without any possibility of employing the whole of its forces in battle, and so will fight at a manifest disadvantage. On the other hand, if the army advances on double lines there remains the risk that one separated column may have to fight a decisive battle before the other column can arrive to its assistance.

Of the two evils the latter is often the lesser, for the enemy may equally divide his forces, and so be inferior on both lines; or should he employ a containing force, and fall with the remainder

on one column, there is always the chance that the containing force may not rise to the rôle apportioned to it, or it may be defeated and swept aside before any really decisive action be brought off. If the army on double lines be so strong that each of its separated forces is superior to the total numbers which can be opposed to it by the enemy, then the danger of operating by double lines is much diminished, and in some cases the manœuvre is actually advantageous, for while one of the separated forces acts against the front of the adversary, the other may be directed against his flank, communications, or rear, and so roll him up altogether.

Moreover, when operating in certain countries, especially in mountain warfare or forest fighting, there is a limit, which is soon reached, beyond which a force of a certain strength cannot advantageously be employed. No profit under such circumstances can be expected from operating on a single line. Consequently, to make use of the excess numbers available on a second line of operations is sound strategy.

When acting in concert with semi-civilised or savage allies, to operate with the disciplined mass of one's own troops by one line, and employ the allies under the leadership of British officers on a second line, is a division of forces often acted upon with great success by British generals. Sir Garnet Wolseley, in his advance on Coomassie (1874) adopted this method. His regular troops formed the main advance, whilst on either flank were forces composed of irregular undisciplined allies under the command of British officers.

The principle of strategy now under discussion is not affected by the numbers of two opposing forces.

If the leader of an army separated into two or more fractions can concentrate that army more quickly than his antagonist can concentrate his separated forces, then the leader of the army which concentrates first is, with regard to a movement of concentration, on "interior" lines as compared with the lines on which his adversary is operating, even though he may be when concentrated numerically weaker in numbers than the one separated fraction of the enemy to which he may be opposed, for he has concentrated his whole available force, which his opponent has not succeeded in doing.

#### Variations of the Principle of Interior *versus* Exterior Lines.

The variations which may arise in adopting this principle of manœuvre, interior *versus* exterior lines, are many, varied, and sometimes very complicated.

They may be summed up as follows :—

## AS REGARDS A STRATEGIC POINT ONLY.

1. Single interior line *versus* single exterior line.
2. Single interior line *versus* double or multiple exterior lines.
3. Double or multiple interior lines *versus* single exterior line.
4. Double or multiple interior lines *versus* double or multiple exterior lines.

## AS REGARDS MOVEMENTS OF CONCENTRATION ONLY.

5. Single interior line *versus* double or multiple exterior lines.
6. Double or multiple interior lines *versus* single exterior line.
7. Double or multiple interior lines *versus* double or multiple exterior lines.

Variations 2, 4, 5, and 7 call for no special remarks, but the reader may perhaps not at first understand variations 1, 3, and 6, so that a few words of explanation with regard to them are necessary.

Variation 1. Any one force defending any particular point which it is the object of the enemy to gain possession of is on an interior single line of defence, if it can reach and so place itself to defend that point, whether directly or indirectly, before the enemy—also on a single line of attack—can reach it or make a decisive stroke for its possession.

Variation 3. A force may be divided, that is, on two or more separate lines, for the defence of a point which is the immediate objective of the enemy. This division of forces may be necessary for convenience of supplies, or may have been entailed owing to absence of news of the enemy's movements, or uncertainty from what direction his real attack will take place. But if the separated fractions of the army on the defence can be concentrated to defend the threatened point, whether directly or indirectly, then it may be said to be on double interior lines as against a single exterior line, if the enemy operates by one line only.

Variation 6. The remarks on Variation 3 also apply to 6. A force may be divided as against an enemy in a single line of attack. But if the separated fractions can concentrate before the enemy attacks, it may be said to be in double interior lines as against a single exterior line.

Examples of Interior *versus* Exterior Lines.

CAMPAIGN ENDING WITH THE SIEGE AND FALL OF SERINGAPATAM,  
1799. (MAP XII.)

Lord Mornington, Governor-General of India, having resolved to undertake operations against Tippoo Sultan, ruler of Mysore, the following forces were set in motion.

On February 3rd, 1799, General Harris, commanding the Madras army, was ordered to enter Mysore territory and advance against Seringapatam.

"On the same day Lieut.-General Stuart, commanding the Bombay army, received orders to co-operate in the attack on Tippoo's capital by advancing simultaneously on it from Cannanore, a town on the Malabar coast about 100 miles southwest of Seringapatam."

The army of the Nizam was also moving on Seringapatam from Hyderabad.

Thus three separate armies were to concentrate on the Mysore capital—one army, General Harris's, from the east; the second, General Stuart's, from the west; and the third, the Nizam's, from the north.

"The total strength of these three armies amounted to approximately 43,000 men. To oppose these forces Tippoo had an army, as yet not assembled, and the uncertain hope of aid from France." He actually received from Mauritius a reinforcement of seventy-six Europeans and twenty-six mulattoes.

*February 11th.*—Harris moved from Vellore, and on the 18th February effected a junction with the Nizam's army.

*March 6th.*—These two armies, called the "Grand Army," crossed the Mysore frontier.

Tippoo, learning of the approach of the "Grand Army," resolved to strike a decisive blow. Leaving small forces to watch the combined British and Nizam's armies, he, at the end of February, turned westwards at the head of about 60,000 men, in the hope of surprising and beating the Bombay army under Stuart, which he was aware was marching on his capital through Coorg.

*February 21st.*—The Bombay army left Cannanore, and four days later reached the summit of the Pondicherrun Pass.

*March 2nd.*—It took post at Sidapore, but the commander made a division of forces by detaching a brigade of native troops eight miles to his front.

*March 7th.*—Suddenly, in the early morning, this isolated brigade was attacked by large masses of Tippoo's army. It was on the point of being annihilated after a stubborn defence, when fortunately General Stuart arrived to its assistance, and "the valour of the British supplied the deficiencies of their tactics, and after a conflict of several hours the Mysoreans were repulsed."\*

Tippoo retreated to his camp, remained stationary for a few days, then returned to Seringapatam, where he arrived on the 11th.

*March 14th.*—Tippoo moved east to meet the "Grand Army."

*March 27th.*—He attacked this army near Malavelly with great resolution, but was eventually repulsed.

Tippoo retreated again to Seringapatam.

*April 5th.*—The “Grand Army,” making a skilful change in its line of march, took ground opposite the west face of the fort of Seringapatam. The Bombay army, having continued its march towards Tippoo’s capital, took ground on the northern face.

The two armies were thus concentrated for the siege.

*May 4th.*—Seringapatam was taken by assault, an assault which ranks amongst the foremost of the exploits of the British Army.

#### *Remarks.*

Tippoo, at Seringapatam, was on a single defensive interior line with regard to the two armies which opposed him. He delivered two separate determined strokes, one against each army, in entirely opposite directions, yet Seringapatam was not uncovered. He was back in Seringapatam in time to defend the place before the concentration of the British forces in front of its walls. Tippoo nearly succeeded in his object of defeating the separated Bombay army. The result, had he been so far successful, would have been serious, for the co-operation of the Bombay army was necessary to the siege of the fortress.

That Tippoo Sultan was unsuccessful in his operations was due, not to faulty strategy on his part, but to his misfortune in having to meet a foe whose great superiority in tactics not only compensated for very great inferiority in numbers, but also, by defeating him in battle, denied him the fruits of his strategy.

In shutting up so great a force in Seringapatam for the defence of that place, it would appear that Tippoo undoubtedly committed an error. A smaller force would equally well have defended Seringapatam. Had Tippoo, having left a garrison in the Mysore capital, personally taken the field with his mobile cavalry, and followed the strategy and tactics of his previous campaigns, the war might have been endlessly prolonged; in any case very arduous further operations would have been necessary finally to overthrow his power. For a guerilla warfare would probably have ensued, of the same nature as that which followed the great battles of the Mahratta War, as that which succeeded the second relief of Lucknow, and as that which for two years continued after the capture of Mandalay.

The fall of Seringapatam, the capital of Mysore, combined with the death of Tippoo Sultan, is an instance of the capture of an enemy’s capital terminating hostilities.\*

\* *Autorities:* Colonel G. Malleson, “Seringapatam, Past and Present”; Forrest, “Sepoy Generals.”

## EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN, 1801.

After Kleber's assassination in Cairo, General Menou succeeded to the command of the French forces in Egypt. This officer refused to ratify the convention of El-Arish, and thereupon the British Government determined to expel the French from Egypt.

*British Plans and Forces.*

The corps of Sir Ralph Abercrombie, appointed to command the British armies, then in the Mediterranean, about 17,500 strong, was ordered to disembark in Egypt.

Sir David Baird, with 8,000 troops, was to sail from Bombay to Suez, cross the desert and descend the Nile to Cairo.

The army of the Grand Vizier was to break up from Acre, and cross the desert which separates Syria from Egypt.

The British forces were acting at the outset from three divergent bases, on three "exterior lines" of operation. The distances which at first separated all three fractions were so great that each was out of touch with the other. The French, on the other hand, had the advantage of a central position, and possession of all the fortified places in Egypt.

Alison says: "The project was magnificently conceived, but it presented almost insurmountable difficulties in the execution, and it was easy to perceive that the weight of the contest would fall upon Abercrombie's forces. To combine an attack with success from various quarters, on an enemy in possession of a central position, from whence he can, at pleasure, crush the first who approaches, is at all times a difficult and hazardous operation. But what must it be when the forces brought together for the enterprise are drawn from different quarters of the globe, and the tumultuous levies of Asia Minor are to be supported by the infantry of England proceeding up the Mediterranean, and the sable battalions of Hindustan wafted from the shores of India by the Red Sea?"

The Ottoman forces were in a bad state of discipline owing to recent defeats inflicted on them by the French; they were weakened by plague, and their commander was very dilatory in completing his arrangements for an advance.

Sir Ralph Abercrombie soon discovered that no reliance could be placed on their co-operation, neither could he rely "on the distant and uncertain aid of the Indian Army." He therefore decided to commence the undertaking by himself with his own troops alone.

*French Forces and Movements.*

General Menou had at his disposal a total force of between 27,000 and 28,000 men, but he made no dispositions to dispute

the threatened invasion. The French army remained in their respective garrisons.

*British Movements.*

On the 1st of March, the British fleet signalled the Egyptian coast, and on the 2nd, in spite of the opposition made by 2,000 French troops very advantageously posted, effected a landing on the shore. The whole of the troops and all stores having disembarked, the castle of Aboukir was invested, and entrenchments were thrown up round the British camp.

On the 12th, the British general moved forward to Mandora tower, where he encamped. The French, reinforced from Cairo and Rosetta, now amounting to 6,000 men with 5 guns, took position in three lines covering the road to Ramanieh, which commanded the direct communication to Cairo and the interior of Egypt and Alexandria.

The selection of Aboukir Bay as the point of disembarkation was very judicious, not only for tactical reasons, but for further strategical movements, for the army once landed, the French with regard to this particular line of operations would be placed on two exterior lines, one to cover Alexandria, and the other line to cover Rosetta and Cairo: or should they concentrate on one line only, then the road either to Alexandria or Cairo, as the case might be, would be left open.

On the 13th the British advanced, and after sustaining considerable losses drove back the first and second lines of the French, who then retired with the bulk of their forces into Alexandria.

The road to Ramanieh was now open to the British, closed to the French.

On the 19th General Menou, from Cairo, discovered a circuitous route into Alexandria, and having with him reinforcements, raised the French forces in Alexandria to 1,100 strong, with 46 guns.

On the 20th the castle of Aboukir surrendered.

On the 21st took place the battle of Alexandria. The battle was a decisive victory for the British arms. Our loss amounted to 1,500 killed and wounded, amongst the former being, unfortunately, the British leader himself: that of the French to over 2,000. The forces engaged on both sides numbered each some 12,000 strong. These numbers are comparatively insignificant, and at first sight the victory or defeat of either army would appear a matter of little moment, and to involve no great consequences either way in its ultimate effects. Alison, however, remarks: "The battle of Alexandria not only delivered Egypt from the Republican yoke; it decided in its ultimate consequences the fate of the civilised world. The importance of a triumph is not always to be measured by the number of troops engaged; 24,000 Romans, under Cæsar at

Pharsalia, changed the fate of antiquity; 35,000 Greeks under Alexander subverted the Empires of the East; 30,000 Republicans at Marengo seated Napoleon on the Consular throne, and established a power which overturned nearly all the monarchies of Europe. The contest of 12,000 British with an equal number of French, on the sands of Alexandria, in its remote effects overthrew a greater Empire than that of Charlemagne, and rescued mankind from a more galling tyranny than that of the Roman Emperors. It first elevated the hopes and confirmed the resolution of the British soldiers; it first broke the charm by which the continental nations had been so long enthralled; it first revived the military spirit of the British people, and awakened the pleasing hope that the descendants of the victors of Cressy and Agincourt had not degenerated from the valour of their fathers. Nothing but the recollection of this decisive trial of strength could have supported the British nation through the arduous conflict which awaited them on the renewal of the war, and induced them to remain firm and unshaken amidst the successive prostration of every continental power, till the dawn of hope began to appear over the summit of the Pyrenees, and the eastern sky was reddened by the conflagration of Moscow. The continental nations, accustomed to the shock of vast armies, and to regard the British only as a naval power, attached little importance to the contest of such inconsiderable bodies of men on a distant shore; but the prophetic eye of Napoleon at once discerned the magnitude of its consequences, and he received the intelligence of the disaster at Alexandria with a degree of anguish equalled only by that experienced from the shock of Trafalgar."\*

For some days after the battle both opponents remained stationary; but the British received a reinforcement of 6,000 Albanians. To these were added a British detachment of 1,000 men, and this combined force advanced on Rosetta. The French garrison of that place retired to Damietta.

The British army being reinforced by 3,000 men in the beginning of May, General Hutchinson, who had succeeded to the command, decided upon recommencing offensive operations. General Menou detached 4,000 troops under La Grange to relieve Rosetta, but La Grange, arriving too late, took post at El-Haft.

General Menou himself held on to Alexandria, which General Hutchinson, by cutting through the isthmus separating Lakes Maadih and Mareotis, practically isolated from Egypt.

Meanwhile, the Grand Vizier, "encouraged by the unwonted intelligence of the defeat of the French forces, and relieved by the cessation of plague in his army," had set his troops in motion

\* Alison, "History of Europe."

and crossed the desert. At his approach, the French abandoned Salahieh and Balbeis, and the garrisons of these places retreated on Cairo.

General Hutchinson, leaving a detachment to observe Alexandria, advanced on Ramanieh.

La Grange at El-Haft, threatened by 4,000 British and 6,000 Turks, retreated.

General Hutchinson directed his advance towards Ramanieh, and the British forces once at that place would interpose between La Grange at El-Haft and Menou at Alexandria : the movement consequently forced La Grange to retire on Cairo.

The British flotilla, ascending the Nile, captured an important convoy descending the river for the use of the garrison at Alexandria.

The arrival of La Grange raised to 10,000 men the French forces at Cairo under General Belliard, who then, at the head of 6,000 chosen troops, moved forward to El-Hanka to meet the Turkish force.

Assisted by a few British officers, the Grand Vizier tactically disposed his troops so effectively that, after an indecisive contest lasting five hours, Belliard retreated on Cairo.

General Hutchinson advanced against Cairo.

On the 20th May the combined British and Turkish armies invested the capital.

On the 21st May General Belliard capitulated with 13,672 combatants.

But what, in the meanwhile, had become of the Indian army under Sir David Baird ? This force, 6,400 strong, had finally concentrated at Bombay on April 3rd. General Baird personally embarked on the 6th. On the 25th he reached Mocha, and thence proceeded to Jeddah. His intention was to disembark his army at Suez, thus diminishing the difficulties of an arduous march across the desert to Cairo, "but the season was too late, and the means of naval transport insufficient." The transports were two months making the voyage, and lost two ships on the way. Eventually the army reached Kosseir, in Upper Egypt, at the end of June, and on the 30th of that month Sir David Baird commenced his famous march (120 miles) across the desert to the Nile, striking that river at Renseh. Here he received despatches from General Hutchinson, which, giving him reliable information as to the position of affairs in Egypt, directed him to descend the Nile to Cairo, in order to co-operate in an attack on Alexandria. The force, in consequence of these instructions, embarked in boats at Thebes, and, after a voyage of nine days, reached Cairo on the 10th August, the whole force being assembled in the Isle of Rhonda by the 27th of the month.

General Hutchinson, at the head of 16,000 men, had already started in the beginning of August for Alexandria.

On the evening of the 27th August General Baird began to move forward on Alexandria, and on the 30th of the month had reached Rosetta, with the leading division of his army.

On that day Menou, finding resistance hopeless, and doubtless influenced by the arrival of Baird's force, proposed to treat for the surrender of Alexandria. On the 31st August Alexandria capitulated, 10,000 men and vast quantities of warlike stores, including 312 guns, falling into the hands of the British.

After the surrender of Alexandria General Hutchinson returned to England with the greater part of his army, leaving 12,000 men, including the Indian troops, to secure the country until a general peace.

#### *Remarks.*

The French in Egypt were on "interior lines." The British and Turkish forces, acting from three different bases, were on three "exterior lines." Owing to the great distances which separated the three fractions of the army, any unity of action was from the outset an impossibility. Two fractions of the army failed to arrive in time, and the British general eventually was compelled to act alone with that part of the army under his immediate command.

The French general, instead of disputing the disembarkation of the British army with superior forces, in which event it is probable that the British leader would not have succeeded in effecting a landing, opposed the disembarkation with a force of 2,000 men only.

So far, however, from General Menou regarding the landing as a success on the part of the English general, and a failure on his own part, he presumed he had the British force more surely in his power. His opponents' numbers were insignificant; he could defeat them on land. At sea, on board the transports, they were invulnerable. At that time the British army and the fighting qualities of the British soldier were not held in high esteem by Continental nations. The victory of Alexandria proved the general mistake. General Hutchinson, at Ramanieh, had turned the tables. He had interposed between the divided forces of the French army. One of the three separated fractions of his own army now appearing on the scene, he was in a strong position, and numerically superior to either of the separated French forces in Alexandria and Cairo. The British leader first struck at the latter place, which immediately capitulated; he then turned on Alexandria, which did likewise.\*

\* The description of this campaign is a summary of that given by Alison in his "History of Europe."

### Double Interior Lines *versus* Multiple Exterior Lines.

#### MASSÉNA'S INVASION OF PORTUGAL 1810. (MAP VI.)

Masséna's original instructions, issued by Napoleon, had been to invade Portugal by both banks of the Tagus at the same time. But Wellington, owing to his possession of the bridge at Villa Velha, was possessed of an interior line of communications. Masséna feared an advance by both banks, because it would then be in Wellington's power to fall with a superior force on one French detachment separated by a broad river from the other. He decided to invade Portugal by the line of the Mondego, and directed a concentration of his troops in that valley.

Reynier, one of Masséna's corps commanders, was in the valley of the Tagus. Opposite to him was a British division commanded by Hill, posted there to watch Reynier.

Reynier passed to the right bank of the Tagus; Hill conformed to the movement.

Reynier to Coria; Hill to Sarzedas, where he was supported by Leith on the line of the River Zezere.

Reynier manœuvred so as to render it doubtful whether he meant to repass the Tagus, to advance upon Sarzedas, or to join Masséna.

Masséna directed the following movements:—

Reynier to Guarda.

Ney to Macal de Chao.

Junot to Pinhel.

By these movements three separate roads were menaced, and the allies kept in suspense as to the ultimate objective.

Wellington, understanding a serious operation was in contemplation, ordered Hill (from Sarzedas) and Leith to concentrate on the line of the River Alva.

On Masséna's decision to advance by one road, that on the right bank of the Mondego, becoming known, Wellington crossed to that bank, and calling Hill and Leith to him, concentrated and took post on the ridge of Busaco.

Masséna likewise concentrated the corps of Ney, Junot, and Reynier.

He attacked the ridge of Busaco on the 29th September, but was repulsed.

#### *Remarks.*

Masséna's forces for the invasion of Portugal originally extended from the River Esla on the right, up to and south of the Tagus on the left. His real plan and line of advance was unknown to Wellington, consequently the allied armies had also necessarily to be much extended.

Wellington's interior communications, by reason of his

possession of the bridge of Villa Velha, thwarted any advance by the line of the Tagus.

Each movement of concentration made by Masséna was conformed to by Wellington. Being on interior lines, he succeeded in concentrating all his available forces in time to meet Masséna's concentrated attack on the ridge of Busaco.

Turning to more recent times, the South African campaign furnishes an example of "interior *versus* exterior" lines. The campaign itself may roughly be divided into four phases, viz.:—

(1) That of a successful defence of the invaded Colonies offered by the British forces.

(2) Unsuccessful attack by the British on the field forces of the two Republics.

(3) Successful invasion of the two Republics by the British.

(4) Irregular ("guerilla") warfare in the final conquest of the Transvaal and Free State Territories.

During the first phase the two Republics acted from the centre of a circle outwards. Interior offensive lines of attack.

During the second and third phases the strategy of the operations as a whole, and not with respect to the operations of each column of attack, may be regarded as that of interior defensive lines against exterior offensive lines.

The great mobility of the Boers—practically all mounted men—was of enormous advantage in all their strategical and tactical combinations, in that it permitted them to evade every combination made to shatter their forces at one decisive stroke.

## CHAPTER V.

### PENETRATING OR BREAKING THROUGH AN ENEMY'S STRATEGIC FRONT.

General Remarks concerning the Application of the Principle—Invasion of the Carnatic by Hyder Ali, 1789—Reasons which Lead to a Dispersion of Forces on a Strategic Front too Extended for its Adequate Defence—Probable Increased Use of this Principle in Campaigns of the Future—Wellington Breaks the French Strategic Front, 1812.

#### **General Remarks concerning the Application of the Principle.**

THE danger to which an army is exposed when operating by more than one line which starts from the same base lies in the fact that the enemy may interpose between the heads of the separated columns and beat them in detail. In other words, the enemy may break through its strategic front. (See Plate I., Fig. 4.)

The strategic front of an army on a simple (single) line of operations is broader than the tactical front occupied for battle. It is comparatively much broader when an army moves by more than one line. If an army on more than one line is not concentrated on its tactical front when contact takes place, then a mass of troops directed on any weak point of its strategical front has many chances of breaking through that front, provided always that the attack be resolute and well pushed home. If the attack be successful in breaking the strategic front, then not only will the columns to either flank of the point broken through be separated, but they may be still further driven asunder by application of the principle discussed in the previous chapter. "Interior *versus* Exterior Lines." For the force which has broken through the strategic front of its opponent will naturally be on interior lines with regard to movements of concentration of the separated fractions of the enemy's forces.

The principle of breaking a front may also be put in practice against an enemy operating by one line only, if the strategic front of the enemy be unduly extended or otherwise weak, and the strategic results of the manoeuvre, if successful, will in this case and under certain conditions be greater than in the case when the enemy is operating by double lines. For in the former

case, if the strategic front be pierced, then the separated fraction of the enemy will be cut off from its line of retreat, while in the latter—that is, if two or more lines of parallel retreat be available—the separated parts may by a rapid retirement, or if the pursuit is not vigorous, be enabled to effect a junction.

The following is a summary of Hamley's remarks :\*

"The parts of an enemy's force being thus separated, a containing force is used to prevent the reunion of the enemy's parts, while the main force strikes one of these detached portions."

"The result being that either of the parts of the separated army which stands to fight may find itself exposed to the blows of the full force of the antagonist, *minus* a detachment left to contain the other part."

"By alternating such blows the assailant may continue both to weaken his antagonist and to interfere between the parts."

"As the commander of a separated part of an army will be playing the enemy's game if he stands to fight, his best course will be to retreat in order to reunite, and this will be best effected by taking advantage of every position to retard the enemy on both lines."

"In such a case a commander who perceives an opportunity for separating the enemy and overwhelming a portion of his force need not generally be solicitous to cover his own communications during the operations, since the enemy will be in no condition to assail them."

"It is necessary, however, to remark that the force which aims at separating the parts of an enemy should be so superior to either part singly as to preserve a superiority after detaching a force in pursuit of the portion first defeated."

Napoleon was a great exponent of the art of breaking the strategic front of an enemy, and his campaigns are the ones usually studied as models of the application of the principle. But the principle was known and practised long before the time of Napoleon, even by Eastern leaders. Hyder Ali in 1780 successfully applied the principle, and the operations of that year are here quoted as an example.

#### INVASION OF THE CARNATIC BY HYDER ALI, 1780. (MAP XII.)

Determining upon an invasion of the Carnatic, Hyder Ali in June, 1780, left Bangalore at the head of a large and well-appointed army and descended from the uplands of Mysore into the plains. His sudden advance was quite unexpected. The British forces, dispersed in their various cantonments, were altogether unprepared for the emergency, so that the irruption of Hyder into the plains of the Carnatic was itself a penetration of the front which faced towards the Mysore highlands.

\* Quoted from "The Elements of Strategy" (Tovey & Maguire).

Sir Hector Munro at that time commanded the troops in Madras. His first instructions were necessarily those for a concentration of the scattered British forces. The opening phases of the campaign may be passed over, since they are not connected with the principle now under discussion, with regard to which it is only necessary to say that Sir Hector Munro's project included the concentration at Conjevaram, about forty miles from Madras, of a force under his own immediate command, and one under command of Colonel Baillie. Munro arrived at Conjevaram on the 29th of August.

On the 3rd September Hyder Ali took post six miles to westward of Munro, and entrenched himself so strongly that the British general hesitated to attack.

Colonel Baillie, on the 25th August, had reached the River Cortelaur, but the river during the night had become so swollen by rain that its passage was not effected till the 3rd September.

On the 6th, Baillie reached Perambakum, fourteen miles from Conjevaram. On this day Tippoo attacked him, but the British force held its own, and Tippoo withdrew. Munro, watched by Hyder, remained inactive, though the sounds of the action could be heard in his camp. Hyder so manoeuvred as to interpose directly between Munro and Baillie.

September 7th passed with no movement on Munro's part.

On September 8th a letter from Baillie reached Munro, stating his difficulties and demanding assistance. Munro detailed 1,000 of his best troops to reinforce Baillie. Purposely misled by the guides, the detachment was nearly betrayed into Hyder's hands, but Colonel Fletcher, who commanded the column, being suspicious that all was not right, took his own course, and reached Baillie in safety on the 9th. On that day Hyder also reinforced Tippoo. Munro remained in camp.

On the evening of the 9th, Baillie continued his march to join Munro at Conjevaram, but, harassed by Tippoo, and uncertain of the route and the nature of the country he was traversing, halted after he had gone five miles. As soon as it became light enough Baillie again continued his march, when he was attacked by Hyder and Tippoo's combined forces. Overwhelmed by very superior numbers, the force under Baillie made a gallant fight. Resistance, however, was hopeless, and ultimately the few survivors who remained alive surrendered. At daybreak on the 10th, Munro, hearing the firing, moved out to Baillie's assistance, but after proceeding four miles only he changed the direction of his line of march; then, hearing from fugitives of Baillie's defeat, he returned to Conjevaram. On the 11th Munro, abandoning all his stores at Conjevaram, retreated, and on the 15th reached Madras.

Hyder made good use of the success he had gained. He

reduced Arcot, laid siege to Wandewash, Vellore, Chingleput, and all the strong places of the Carnatic. The whole open country was ravaged by the Mysorean horse, who, penetrating to the very walls of Madras itself, created the utmost consternation in the town, the inhabitants of which even went so far as to make preparations for crossing the bar, and abandoning Madras, if not the whole Carnatic, to its fate.\*

Hyder, having interposed between the forces of Munro and Baillie, had broken through their strategic front, though that front in this particular instance was very limited. Having secured this initial advantage, he withdrew a great part of his army immediately in front of Munro, and reinforced Tippoo, opposed to Baillie. By reason of the very superior numbers he then put into his line of battle, he utterly crushed Baillie. He then, in turn, attacked and harassed Munro in his retreat from Conjevaram.

#### **Reasons which Lead to a Dispersion of Forces on a Strategic Front too Extended for its Adequate Defence.**

Since the dangers of operating by double or multiple lines are so great, the motives which induce a general to manoeuvre strategically by more than one line must be inquired into. It is only natural to presume that the advantages to be derived from operating by a simple (single) line with forces concentrated on a strategic front not too extended for its adequate defence will not be lightly thrown aside and abandoned, unless compensating benefits be gained. The causes are clear enough, and need only to be stated to be at once understood and appreciated. Some of these causes have already been touched upon in the preceding chapter. They may be shortly summarised as follows:—

1. An army, the numbers of which exceed a certain total, if it should march by one road only and meet an enemy already deployed for battle, runs the risk of having the head of its column driven back and defeated before the rear could arrive to its assistance.

2. To move by as many roads as possible, even if the roads are not within supporting distance of each other, favours rapidity of marching, and generally increases the mobility of an army.

3. It is far more convenient, and is sometimes absolutely necessary for purposes of supply.

4. Political or local reasons often induce a general to cover an area which he would otherwise prefer to abandon.

With regard to 1, Hamley points out that had Napoleon, in his invasion of Belgium, 1815, advanced by one single line, instead of by three roads, his army, consisting of 90,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, 350 guns, etc., would have extended to forty-

\* Fortescue, "History of the British Army."

nine miles, and this irrespective of baggage or stores of any description. The deployment of a force extended forty-nine miles along one road to meet an antagonist, who might already be prepared for battle, would have been a sheer impossibility. Hence, Napoleon was obliged to move by more than one road.

Reasons 2 and 3 need no special comment; the advantages stated are obvious.

With regard to 4, at the commencement of the South African war political and local reasons led to the occupation of a very extended front for the defence of Cape Colony, a front which was so weak that it might easily have been pierced by an adversary possessed of greater strategic skill than that exhibited by the Boer leaders.

The leader of an army operating from the same base, but who, for reasons already given, is compelled to advance by double or more lines, will, in order to avoid the dangers thereof, endeavour, so far as possible, to advance by lines which are parallel to, and within close supporting distance of, each other, so that while he obtains the advantages to be derived from superior mobility, and greater facility of supplies, he will at the same time be in a better position to concentrate his whole available forces for the impending battle from a strategic on a tactical front. But here a difficulty at once arises, in that, owing to the direction of roads, railways, and natural obstacles, it is frequently impossible to advance by double or more lines which are, and continue to be, within supporting distance of each other. Especially is this the case when mountain barriers and rivers have to be crossed, for these obstacles can ordinarily only be passed by large armies at certain known and fixed points.

Suppose an army, superior in numbers, on the whole, to its adversary, to be traversing a mountain barrier, or passing a river, on two lines. An opportunity may present itself to the enemy to fall with his whole force united on one of the separated fractions of the divided army, whilst the other is occupied in the passage of the defile. The commander of the army which on the whole is superior in numbers has been caught, if not unawares, yet at a disadvantage. He knows that if he can but unite his forces he could engage his opponent at any rate with an equal chance of success. As it is, one of his separated fractions is being beaten in detail, while the other fraction is so circumstanced as to be in no position to render any aid whatever.

If, at the moment when two or more separated columns are not within supporting distance of each other, an enemy can succeed in penetrating between the heads of the separated

columns, then that enemy is strategically very favourably placed. If his tactics equal his strategy, and in defeating the separated columns he drives them yet further asunder, then he will have successfully accomplished one of the five principles of strategic manœuvre.

Given certain unfavourable conditions, such as bad roads, mud, defiles, etc., it will take an army as long to march ten miles as it would to march twenty where the roads are good and other things equal. When, therefore, two or more separated fractions of an army are manœuvring in the presence of an enemy, but the intention is to concentrate for battle, then the time it will take to concentrate is the factor to be reckoned with, not the distance. As an instance we may quote

#### WELLINGTON'S VICTORY AT ASSAYE, MAHRATTA CAMPAIGN (1803).

Passing over the preliminary manœuvres of the opposing armies, we start with the concentration, by Scindiah and the Raja of Berar, of their forces, consisting of 50,000 men (of whom 30,000 were cavalry) and 100 guns, at Bokerdun. General Wellesley and Colonel Stephenson, who commanded two British columns, had agreed at a conference, held on the 21st September, to make a combined attack on the Mahratta army, then distant about a day and a half's journey, and were reported to be encamped at Bokerdun.

"The two generals separated on the day following, and advanced toward the concentrated point by different routes—Colonel Stephenson by the western, General Wellesley by the eastern road, having a range of hills between them. The motive for this separation, though it may be doubted whether it was a sufficient one for the division, in the neighbourhood of so great a force, was the difficulty of getting forward the united army through the narrow defiles by which both roads passed, and the chance that if the two divisions moved by one line the enemy would retire by another, and the opportunity of striking a decisive blow be lost. In moving forward thus parallel to each other, the two corps were not more than twelve miles asunder; but the intervening hills rendered any mutual support impossible. Upon arriving within five miles of the enemy, General Wellesley received intelligence that their horse had retreated, and that the infantry alone remained, exposed to the chance of defeat if quickly assailed. As the chief strength of the Mahrattas lay in their cavalry, the English general resolved upon an immediate attack, and despatched orders to Colonel Stephenson to co-operate in the proposed enterprise.

"When he arrived, however in sight of the enemy he found their whole army, infantry, cavalry, with an immense artillery, drawn up in a strong position, with the River Kaitna, which

could be crossed only by a single ford, flowing along their front. The sight was enough to appal the stoutest heart: thirty thousand horse, in one magnificent mass, crowded the right; a dense army of infantry, powerfully supported by artillery, formed the centre and left; the gunners were beside their pieces, and a hundred pieces of cannon in front of the line stood ready to vomit forth death upon the assailants. Wellington paused for a moment, impressed, but not daunted, by the sight. His whole force, as Colonel Stephenson had not come up, did not exceed eight thousand men, of whom sixteen hundred were cavalry; the effective native British were not above fifteen hundred, and he had only sixteen pieces of cannon. But feeling at once that a retreat in presence of so prodigious a force of cavalry was impossible, and that the most audacious course was, in such circumstances, the most prudent, he ordered an immediate attack."\*

Wellington won a notable victory at Assaye, but he did not fight that battle with the whole of his available forces. A distance of twelve miles only separated his own immediate command from that of Colonel Stephenson, but the co-operation of the 8,000 men under the latter officer—a co-operation which it must be remembered had been definitely agreed upon by the two officers—did not take place. Wellington, when the day was already far spent, finding himself suddenly in the presence of the Mahratta army, felt himself bound to attack at once; the battle was finished before Colonel Stephenson, even had he marched to Wellington's assistance, could have had *time* to traverse the twelve miles of difficult country which lay between them.

"Whenever an army, which is so confident in its fighting power as to desire to engage the entire concentrated forces of the enemy, possesses the faculty (by reason either of an angular base, or of such circumstances as obstacles . . . ) of striking at its adversary's flank or rear, it enjoys in that circumstance an advantage and opportunity which it might vainly seek in manœuvres against the hostile front. By a resolute advance it may even combine the different advantages of forcing the enemy to form front to flank, and of separating his forces and engaging the parts successively.

"But if an army be inferior in numbers, it will manifestly be wiser to seek to separate the hostile forces and engage them separately; for in striking at the flank it may compel that concentration which should be its great aim to prevent, as Napoleon would have done had he turned Wellington's right in Belgium."†

\* Alison, "History of Europe."

† Hamley, "Operations of War."

### Probable Increased Use of the Principle of Piercing an Enemy's Strategic Front in Campaigns of the Future.

In future conflicts between nations reckoned as first class powers, the numbers which both sides may be expected to put in the field will probably be far greater than those which have taken part in the great battles of the last few centuries. Whether these huge forces will actually come into contact on a field of battle is problematical. The men will be present. But it is doubtful, owing to this very increase in numbers, whether all can possibly be concentrated for battle in any one sphere of operations. These vast armies must be scattered if only to exist. If so much be granted, it follows that in wars of the future, both the strategic fronts of the two opponents being much extended, he who can more quickly concentrate his army in one mass, and break through the strategic front of his enemy, either before that enemy commences to concentrate, or while he is in the act of concentrating, on a tactical front, will have already gained a strategical success.

In the opening phases of a future campaign, when the forces which the two belligerents may be expected to put into the field will be very great, to turn a flank or to make a stroke at a line of communications without equally exposing one's own will be almost impossible, unless one side possess the advantages of a favourable configuration of a frontier or base line (see Part II., Chapters VI. and VII.). There remains the application of the principle of breaking the enemy's strategic front, and to apply the principle with the greatest chance of success the operation should, as far as possible, be one in the nature of a surprise. It is obvious that if the enemy receive sufficient information of the manœuvre in contemplation he will, by collecting his forces, spread out on a strategic front, be in a position to meet a concentrated attack by a concentrated defence, in which case he who hoped to break through a weak defence will find his intention so far foiled. And whether the attack be a surprise will depend upon secrecy in design and rapidity in execution of the attack.

#### WELLINGTON BREAKS THE FRENCH STRATEGIC FRONT, 1812. (MAPS I. AND VIII.)

No better example of breaking the strategic front of an enemy can be quoted than Wellington's campaign of the opening months of the year 1812, when he captured by assault the two fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos, January 19th and April 7th respectively.

It had long been plain to Wellington that the capture of these two strong places was a necessary preliminary to any advance into Spain, inasmuch as they respectively commanded

the two main issues between Spain and Portugal. But how to gain possession of them—that was the difficulty. Both were strongly fortified, and the resistance which might be expected from their garrisons was sure to be prolonged and obstinate. But if Wellington, concentrating his forces for the purpose, directed them against Ciudad Rodrigo, Lisbon would be uncovered against a counter-stroke by the line of the Tagus. On the other hand, if Badajos were made the first objective, Oporto would be laid bare. And the troops at Wellington's disposal were numerically too weak to attempt with any reasonable prospect of success the simultaneous capture of both places. Whatever might be attempted, it is evident that secrecy in design and celerity in execution were absolutely essential.

For reasons which it is here needless to enter into, Wellington determined to make Ciudad Rodrigo his first objective.

Owing to Napoleon's campaign in Russia, the French army in the Peninsula had lately been much weakened. It had been reorganised as follows:—

The army of the north with headquarters at Burgos, whose main duty was the protection of the great French line of communications with France by Bayonne.

The army of the south in Andalusia, under Soult.

The army of Portugal under Marmont. This marshal's forces were much dispersed, extended as they were from the Asturias to the Tagus—a necessary dispersion, not only to keep touch with the armies on both its flanks, but also to procure the means of subsistence, for the French armies, unlike that of the British, which depended for its supplies of food as well as of warlike *materiel* on a line of communications, lived on the resources of the country in which they operated.

The necessary siege *materiel* having been prepared, it was quietly collected on the left bank of the Agueda, over which a bridge was thrown six miles below Ciudad Rodrigo. Thirty-five thousand men, being rapidly concentrated, the investment of the fortress commenced on January 9th. The details of the siege may be passed over, it being sufficient to state that the siege operations were forced, and that the place succumbed to assault on the 19th.

In the meantime, what had Marmont been about? For Ciudad Rodrigo was in his sphere of operations, and he was responsible for its safety.

Napoleon had previously directed Marmont to concentrate either at Valladolid or Salamanca. These instructions Marmont had not complied with. However, on January 11th he arrived at Valladolid, but not till the 15th did he hear of the siege. Then he ordered a concentration at Salamanca. On the 25th he had concentrated 45,000 men at that place, from whence

to Ciudad Rodrigo was only four marches. On the 26th he received news of the capture of the fortress, upon which he retired to Valladolid.

Wellington's eyes were now turned towards Badajos. He had already given orders in the previous month for the preparation of the siege *matériel*, and by February much had been made ready and secretly collected at Elvas.

Marmont, unable to penetrate Wellington's design, had again dispersed his troops, the more easily to feed them.

By March the 5th the allied army was already well on its way to the Alemtejo, the protection of Ciudad Rodrigo having been entrusted to the Spaniards.

Wellington having maintained his headquarters as long as possible on the Coa as a blind, Marmont remained in ignorance of the march.

Wellington reached Elvas on March 11th and resolved upon the immediate investment of Badajos, though the siege train was not at that time complete.

On the 15th the passage of the Guadiana was provided for by pontoons and flying bridges.

On the 16th the enemy's outposts round Badajos were driven in, and the third English siege of Badajos commenced by an army of 15,000 men, covered by a force 30,000 strong. This force was afterwards joined by the fifth British division, raising the total to 51,000 men.

Into the details of this siege, also, it is unnecessary to enter.

Badajos, after a gallant defence, was captured by assault on the night of the 6th April.

Soult, during the siege, had not remained entirely inactive, but, having little fear of the town, had commenced a careful organisation of a powerful army for its relief, an organisation which included the co-operation of part of Marmont's forces.

On the 1st of April, Soult marched from Seville, and by the 5th had reached Llerina. "Gain of time was now, as in war it generally is, the essential ingredient of success." But by the 6th he had concentrated not more than 24,000 men at that place. On the 7th he reached Villa Franca. On the 8th "he was in march to fight," when he received news that Marmont was still in the north. He consequently fell back to Llerina, for the allies could place 45,000 men into line of battle as against his 24,000. Seville being threatened by Spanish and Portuguese forces from across the lower Guadiana, Soult proceeded thence by forced marches, reaching Seville on the 11th.

By the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos, Wellington had broken not only a strategic front, but a *fortified* strategic front, a far more difficult and hazardous operation. To secrecy in design and celerity in execution his success must be mainly

ascribed. In both cases, though inferior in forces on the whole to his opponents, he had so manœuvred as to bring superior forces to bear at the two decisive points respectively. If only for this reason, the details of his campaign should be studied at least as attentively as those of Napoleon, usually quoted as an example of this principle of the art of war. Wellington's great rival, though one of the most famous leaders of all time, was not the only general who recognised and understood how to bring superior force to bear on a decisive point.\*

\* The leading outlines of the campaign only are given. The authority quoted is Napier. Every English officer should be acquainted with the whole operations in detail, which are to be found described in graphic language in Book XVI., Vol. IV.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE DIRECT ADVANCE ON THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE.

**Advantages of the Employment of the Principle—The Direct Advance in the War in South Africa—Success with which the Principle has been Applied in Wars Against Savage or Semi-Civilised Nations—Campaign for the Relief of Madras, 1746—Retreat of Colonel Monson, 1804—The Retreat from Kabul (1842).**

#### **Advantages of the Employment of the Principle.**

THE advantages to be gained by the employment of the principle of the direct advance towards the objective may be summed up as follows :—

The army moves concentrated.

Being concentrated, it is under the immediate control of one directing will. The influence of the commander is immediately felt throughout the whole force.

Errors in combination, and in the timing of various movements, are lessened or avoided altogether, and the risks of faulty dispositions and mistakes on the part of subordinate leaders are diminished.

If the line of advance be short, fewer opportunities are presented to the enemy of making turning or flanking movements or of operating against the line of communications.

The shorter and more direct the line of advance, the more the enemy is reduced to the pure defensive.

It is the quickest and surest method of gaining contact with the foe.

The principle of the direct advance is a compelling strategic manœuvre. By it the advantage of the initiative is secured, it possesses the merit of simplicity in design, time is not wasted, and, provided the advance be vigorous and determined in execution, it offers no rest to the enemy.

From many points of view, therefore, this principle has much to recommend it, and it certainly lends itself to early tactical decisions, that is to battles, which after all are the determining factors of strategy. On the other hand, battles are avoided by retirement and by the adoption of Fabian tactics.

But it must be admitted that the direct advance towards

the objective has a disadvantage, if the advance be directed towards the centre of the line along which the enemy's forces are posted, for then it will be directed towards the very point where the enemy can most quickly concentrate his forces.

Nevertheless the disadvantage is more imaginary than real, and will be much diminished in that, the initiative being on the side which adopts this principle, a greater or less period of time will elapse before the enemy can determine whether the advance be a feint or not. The time so gained is a distinct and immediate advantage in favour of the direct advance, as, until the doubt be settled, the enemy is unlikely to commence any concentration of his forces. If, then, the line of advance be short, and the rate of marching rapid, it may yet happen that the direct advance will break through the opposing line of defence before complete concentration has taken place. In this case it is probable that the separated forces of the enemy's broken line of defence will be forced to retreat on eccentric lines—an advantage in favour of the attack, which advantage will be the greater if the separated forces of the enemy, thus driven asunder, have no previously prepared lines of retreat and base on and towards which they may retire. But the principle of manœuvre will not then be so much that of the "direct advance," no matter what the original intention may have been, as that of penetrating the divided strategic front of an enemy.

Direct advances on the objective usually lead to early desperate and decisive battles, in which an obstinate defence on the part of the foe must be expected. For the enemy, compelled by the very nature of the movement, will strive to stop the advance by occupying and holding strong commanding defensive positions. Assaults on such positions, which are frequently anticipated and have consequently been specially prepared against attack beforehand, involve great losses to both sides, and the attackers, in spite of victory, must be prepared to be the heavier losers. Nevertheless, if the attack be successful, the object in view is more quickly attained, and the enemy sooner brought to the end of his resources. Two or three such battles, if they do not actually terminate the war, will produce results so decisive as entirely to change in favour of the victors, and to the great disadvantage of the defeated, the whole conditions under which the campaign is fought.

Large losses in decisive battles, by which the end sought after is attained, or brought nearer to a successful conclusion, must, though a matter for regret, be accepted. In war, it is not the loss of life in actual battle which amounts to so formidable a total, but loss of life from disease, and from the hardships of a campaign. The longer the campaign is protracted, the greater in proportion are these losses.

This is a truth proved by the military history of nations since the beginning of time; and that, even in these days of modern medical appliances, hygienic knowledge, and, in civilised warfare, a humanity common to both sides, it still remains a fact, is proved by the war in South Africa.\*

If the chances and probabilities of obtaining decisive results are in favour of the direct advance, owing either to mere superiority in numbers or superiority in armament, training and discipline, no object whatever is gained by resorting to more indirect methods.

The direct advance is a strategy which best suits the character of the British nation, grim and earnest in its method of attack; it is of all strategic manœuvres essentially that of the offensive, and it is "offensive strategy which annihilates."

The advantage of mere ability to fight and to deal direct blows is a factor leading to success, which must not be lightly abandoned for combinations, in which chance, or one false step, may ruin all.

"War," said Stonewall Jackson, "means fighting. The business of the soldier is to fight. Armies are not called out to dig trenches, to throw up breastworks, to live in camps, but to find the enemy and strike him; to invade his country and do him all possible damage in the shortest possible time. This will involve great destruction of life and property while it lasts; but such a war will of necessity be of brief continuance, and so would be economy of life and property in the end. To move swiftly, strike vigorously, and secure all the fruits of victory is the secret of successful war."†

The principle of the direct advance probably best fulfils this celebrated general's idea as to the proper method of waging war. At the same time, none knew better than he, or more practically put to the proof, the uses and advantages to be derived from the application of the remaining four principles of strategic manœuvre enumerated in the preceding chapters.

The implied reference to the spade in the above quotation does not apply to its "tactical," but rather, if it may be so defined, its "strategical" use. For no armies better understood or more fully appreciated the "tactical" use of the spade than the armies of the North and South in the great Civil War in America, more especially during the concluding operations of the campaign.

In wars between two civilised powers, when the chances of victory to either side are equal, each will probably endeavour to

\* The losses suffered by the British armies up to 1st June, 1901, only, amounted to:—Killed or died of wounds, 5,825; died from disease, 10,037; invalided, 52,956, of whom 43,000 suffered from disease.—*Official.*

† Lieutenant-Colonel Henderson, "Stonewall Jackson."

gain the initiative, and this will naturally fall to that nation which is the more prepared and ready to embark on active operations the moment war is declared. The initiative once gained, the power of keeping it is more likely to be retained if the opening movement be a determined and direct advance towards the objective, which should be some vital point in the enemy's line of defence; for the more direct the advance, the more will the enemy, from the commencement of active operations, be thrown back on the defensive, and consequently the earlier may a decisive battle be expected, which, if crowned with success, will upset all his plans and will cause him to relinquish whatever hopes he may have entertained of assuming the offensive, and with it the initiative.

In savage warfare it is not superiority in strategy which is the deciding factor, but superiority in tactics. Tactics favour a regular army, while strategy favours the enemy—therefore the object should be to fight, not to manœuvre.\* To enlarge on this statement is unnecessary, for it is obvious that the elaborate organisation of regular armies ties them to their lines of communications, which cramps freedom of movement over the theatre of operations; whilst the savage adversary, with no lines of communications, and living to a great extent on the supplies of the country, is much more mobile, and is in a position to move hither and thither at will. Superiority in strategic manœuvring will, therefore, on account of their greater mobility, be in favour of savage or irregular forces rather than regular armies. On the other hand, superior armament, superiority in drill, discipline, and tactical manœuvring, will be in favour of regular armies. Therefore, the sooner the enemy can be met and defeated in a decisive battle the sooner will the campaign be concluded. In savage warfare, consequently, the best strategy is that which will soonest lead to decisive actual contact.\*

It has already been explained how, in the first invasion of Mysore, the long and devious line of operations by which it was hoped to turn the Mysore plateau signally failed, and how in the second invasion success in the preliminary operations was at once attained by the adoption of a more direct advance.

Since in so many of Britain's campaigns against a savage enemy, the primary objective has been the relief of a beleaguered garrison, there is usually no choice as to the strategy to be adopted. Necessity compels that of the "direct advance." In these cases time is the deciding factor, and therefore the shortest and the quickest route available must be adopted as the line of advance.

If the direct advance on an objective be omitted as a principle of strategy, then in half the campaigns of the British

\* Captain Callwell, "Small Wars."

army there has been no strategy. But who, after a study of our campaigns all the world over, will be prepared to admit this statement? It is, moreover, in direct conflict with Moltke's definition that strategy "is the application of sound common sense to the conduct of war." For sound common sense, in the conduct of our campaigns against wholly savage or semi-civilised nations, frequently dictates the adoption of this principle. Certainly its unvarying success cannot be denied. And when it has not been employed the result has usually been disastrous, as Colonel Monson's campaign, India, 1803 (page 107), and the retreat from Jellalabad, 1849 (page 110), amply testify, while a brilliant example of success, amongst many others, is furnished by Sir Charles Napier's operations in Scinde (Victory of Meanee), 1843.

The direct advance does not necessarily imply an advance by one column only. There may be two, or even more columns, each on its own line of advance, but all must be within close supporting distance of each other. Otherwise, if not within supporting distance of each other the separated columns must, in order to fight, make a movement of concentration. But once a movement of concentration commences, then the separated columns will be on "exterior" or "interior" lines, according as the case may be, with respect to the forces of the enemy, and strategic manœuvres of this nature are more properly classified under the principle of interior *versus* exterior lines.

In European armies of recent and modern times, arms, equipment, and training are often so equal or so indeterminate that there is not much appreciable difference at the commencement of a campaign between the forces of two belligerents. Numbers, therefore, become one of the deciding factors in considering and estimating the probabilities and chances of victory or defeat. From this results one ruling idea, which governs the strategical movements of two opposing armies in European campaigns, namely, so to manœuvre as to bring, if possible, superiority of numbers to bear on the field of battle.

But this consideration as to numbers does not apply by any means to British strategy in campaigns against semi-civilised and savage nations who have, time and again, been met and defeated by British generals commanding armies far inferior in numbers to the forces placed in the field by their opponents. The point which the British general has to consider and decide is whether the known superiority of his army in discipline, arms, equipment, and tactical movements in the field of battle will compensate for inferiority of numbers, and in a correct estimation of the value of, and of the reliance which may be placed upon, these factors, British generals have been pre-eminently successful.

Nevertheless, the principle of both continental and British generals is the same in the end, namely, to bring superior pressure to bear at the actual point of contact, whether that superior pressure be due to superiority of numbers, as in European warfare, or to superiority in arms, discipline, training, etc., as in British warfare against semi-civilised or savage nations. Hence arises a similarity in the principles which govern the strategical movements of civilised armies when opposed to each other, and of British armies in savage warfare, though the deciding factors constituting the pressure may be, and often are, vastly different.

Therefore, in considering the strategy of British forces when engaged against a civilised or a savage enemy there arises this distinction. In the former, other factors being equal, that of numbers is a determining factor; in the latter, it is not actual numbers that are a decisive factor, but a superiority in arms, drill, training, discipline, etc., which will compensate for inferiority in numbers.

Where an army with superiority of numbers in its favour is enabled to advance direct towards its objective, it is sound strategy to do so. It is better to profit from the advantage of superior numbers tactically, when within striking distance of an enemy, or on the actual field of battle itself, than to divide the army and to seek success from strategical movements. Once the army is divided, and the separated fractions are beyond immediate support each of the other, the advantage of superior numbers may be lost, for the enemy may defeat the separated fractions in detail.

#### The Direct Advance in the War in South Africa.

The first phase of the late South African war, when the British forces were engaged in stemming the onward advance of the Boers in Natal, and taking such precautionary measures as were possible with the limited means at disposal for the protection of the frontiers of Cape Colony, was defensive. After the landing of reinforcements that strategy changed from the defensive to the offensive.

Three separate armies, acting—

- (1) In Natal,
- (2) In East Cape Colony on the East London, Queenstown and Stormberg line,

(3) In West Cape Colony in the advance to Kimberley, commenced, the first and third an offensive forward movement, and the second, a defensive-offensive movement, having each a separate object in view.

These were respectively—

- (1) The relief of Ladysmith,

- (2) The driving back of the Boer commandoes concentrating in the neighbourhood of Stormberg,
- (3) The relief of Kimberley.

Owing to the defeats suffered at the hands of the Boers in Natal at Colenso and Spion Kop, in Cape Colony at Stormberg, and in the forward movement on Kimberley (the reverse at Magersfontein), the advance of all three armies was brought to a standstill.

Each of the three movements was in the nature of a direct advance on the objective, and the untoward results of all three operations may therefore, at first sight, be urged as an argument against the principle. But it was not the strategy of these three operations considered *separately, and not as a whole*, that was at fault, but rather a combination of some of those influences which, unforeseen and unprovided for, suddenly intervene to upset the best laid plans.

As the question then presented itself to the respective generals of the three British forces, and since the conditions of success as then understood were present, the direct advance was the best advance. Many conditions were in its favour. For instance, trained and disciplined armies were to be pitted against bodies of men untrained to move in masses, and possessing no discipline in the usual interpretation of the word. This factor, added to that of numbers, was reasonably relied upon to turn the scale in favour of the British arms wherever and whenever actual contact between the opposing forces should take place. Nevertheless, two conditions, incorrectly estimated, but, as after events proved, important beyond all others, sufficed to bring all three advances for a moment to a complete standstill.

These were:—

1. The unexpected resolution displayed by the Boers in holding their tactical positions of defence, and the fighting qualities of the nation as a whole.

2. The power of the modern rifle.

With regard to the first, the fault of underestimating the fighting qualities of their enemy is one frequently made by the British nation; but in this instance the mistake was one which can hardly be imputed as a matter of blame to British generals, for with hardly an exception all those best qualified to judge, that is, men who had spent the greater part of their lives in South Africa, and were supposed to have an intimate knowledge of the Boer character, prophesied that the Boers would never stand against the organised shock of trained and disciplined armies, prognostications which were to a certain extent justified by the later phases of the war.

With regard to the second, the power of the modern rifle.

In South Africa two civilised nations, armed with rifles of the very latest pattern, met practically for the first time. The power of the new rifle, though foreseen and foretold by the few, had not been fully appreciated by the many. The theory previously put forward by the few, though now proved correct, was at the time generally regarded as an exaggeration of probable facts. It was a matter of opinion. Who was right and who was wrong could not be decided until two civilised armies, equally well armed, had actually met in battle. Unluckily it was the fortune, or misfortune, of the British army to put the theory to the proof. The offensive strategy of the British compelled their armies to attack, tactically, the Boers in positions extremely favourable for defence. Consequently, in comparison the British losses were great, and were felt the more in that they were unexpected. It was not, therefore, strategy but tactics that were at fault. And again, this inferiority in tactics cannot be justly ascribed, in the opening phases of the campaign, to bad leading, but to leading based (to repeat) on a false assumption of the fighting qualities of the Boers and a mistaken idea as to the power of the firearm of modern times.

But the experience gained in tactics in the battles on the Tugela River, and in the advance on Kimberley, was not thrown away. Tactics at once improved, and this improvement, combined with superiority in numbers, ultimately led to Lord Roberts's direct and successful advance from Bloemfontein to Johannesburg and Pretoria.

#### **Success with which the Principle has been Applied in Wars Against Savage or Semi-Civilised Nations.**

Since, as already stated, in wars between two civilised nations equally well armed, disciplined, etc., superiority in numbers is so deciding a factor in the strategical problem, instances are rare in which one army with a known disproportionate inferiority of numbers has successfully carried out a direct forward offensive movement on its objective. On the contrary, the army with inferior numbers usually confines and directs its efforts at first to warding off the blows of the antagonist, in the hope of afterwards adopting the offensive. But in British campaigns, especially against semi-civilised or savage nations, the principle of advancing with inferior numbers direct on the objective has been over and over again successfully resorted to. And this principle has been successfully applied when such important factors as armament, mobility and courage have not been on the side of the British, but rather in favour of the enemy. In the numerous campaigns in the Indian Peninsula the weight of armament in artillery placed in the field by our antagonists has more often than not been in their

favour rather than in ours. The jezail, until Sir Charles Napier set himself to prove the contrary, was at one time thought to be superior to the Brown Bess of the British soldier. The mobility of the Mysore armies in the campaigns against Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sultan, of the Mahratta horsemen, and of the tribes of the North-West and North-East frontiers of India, has always been superior to that of the British forces engaged against them. The courage of Pathans, Afghans, and the Soudanese when inspired and excited by religious zeal and fanaticism has been at least equal to that of our own men.

Had the leaders of British armies waited for superiority in numbers alone, the victories of Plassey, Assaye, Laswarree, and Meanee, which helped to gain the Indian Empire, the numerous frontier campaigns by which that empire was extended, and the battles and sieges of the Mutiny which enabled us to maintain it when it was assailed by the formidable revolt of the Indian sepoys, would never have been fought and won. The various expeditions in South, East, and West Africa, which have resulted in large acquisitions of territory in that continent, would never have been undertaken and brought to successful conclusions. The victories of Tel-el-Kebir, Atbara, and Omdurman, by which Egypt and the Soudan were restored to our ally the Khedive of Egypt, would not now be a matter of history. In fact, the annals of the British army abound in examples, in nearly all cases successful, of this one principle of strategy, "the direct advance with inferior forces on the objective."

#### PARADIS' CAMPAIGN FOR THE RELIEF OF MADRAS, OCTOBER, 1746.

Curiously enough, in campaigns in the Indian Peninsula the secret of the success of a direct advance with inferior forces on the objective was taught us, not by any British leader, but by a Swiss named Paradis, one of Dupleix's officers. Since the lesson learnt has been of such inestimable advantage to us as a nation in conducting our wars in the East, and has been so fully taken to heart and acted upon by all British generals since that time, it is appropriate to quote Paradis' campaign, though no British troops or native levies officered by Englishmen actually took any share in it. Anwarudin, however, Paradis' opponent, was our ally, and may be said to have taken up arms partly on our behalf.

#### *General Situation.*

In October, 1746, Madras was held by the French, who had, however, engaged to deliver the town to Anwarudin, the Nabob of the Carnatic. Owing to the long delay in handing over the place the Nabob grew suspicious, and despatched his son, Maphuze Khan, with 10,000 men, to invest Madras; whereupon

Dupleix sent orders to the officer in command, d'Espremesnil, to hold the town at all hazards.

Maphuze Khan duly carried out his instructions and invested Madras. The French in Madras, under d'Espremesnil, finding themselves hard pressed, made a sortie on the 2nd November 1746, and, chiefly owing to their great superiority in handling and working their field guns, drove back Maphuze, who abandoned his camp to the victor, and took up a position two miles to the westward of Madras.

The next day, the 3rd of November, Maphuze Khan learnt that a French force from Pondicherry was on the march to Madras. He resolved to interpose between this force and the French garrison in Madras, and to this end marched the evening of the same day to St. Thomé, taking up a position on the River Adyar, at a point where it would be necessary for the force from Pondicherry to cross the river should it continue in its direct advance on Madras.

The French from Pondicherry consisted only of 230 Europeans and 700 sepoyys, under the command of Paradis.

D'Espremesnil, in Madras, receiving news of Maphuze Khan's intercepting movement, despatched a messenger to Paradis warning him of the same, and recommending him to defer an engagement until the garrison of Madras should have time to operate on Maphuze Khan's rear.

On the 4th November, at daybreak, Paradis advanced to the south bank of the River Adyar, and discovered Maphuze Khan's army in position between the north bank of the river and the town of St. Thomé.

"After lingering for another day in the vicinity of Madras, Maphuze marched to St. Thomé, some four miles to the southward of it, to intercept a French force which was on its way to relieve d'Espremesnil's garrison. On the morning of the 4th November the expected detachment appeared, a mere handful of 230 Europeans and 700 sepoyys, which had been sent up from Pondicherry under a Swiss officer named Paradis. The situation of Paradis was sufficiently perilous to have alarmed him. His orders were to open communication with Madras; and here was an army with 10,000 men, with artillery, drawn up on the bank of a river before him to bar his advance. Now, after a century and a half of fighting in India, no British officer would be for a moment at a loss as to the course to be pursued, but Paradis had neither tradition nor experience to guide him. However, whether by inspiration or from despair, he did exactly what he ought. Knowing the river to be fordable, he led his men without hesitation across it and straight upon the enemy. The effect of this bold attack was instantaneous. The Nabob's army was at once transformed into a disorganised mob, which fled headlong

into the town of St. Thomé, only to be crowded and jammed in hopeless confusion in the streets. Paradis, following up his success, poured volley after volley into the struggling mass; while, to perfect the victory, a party which had been detached from Madras to join hands with him came up in rear of the fugitives and cut off their retreat. This attack in rear, always dreaded by Oriental nations, completed the rout. Maphuze Khan, who was mounted on an elephant, was one of the first to fly; and his army streamed away to westward, a helpless, terrified rabble, never pausing in its flight until it reached Arcot.”\*

“With this action, it may be said that the dominancy of a European nation in India was assured. Hitherto the native armies had been treated with respect. Their numbers had given the impression of overwhelming strength; and it had not occurred to Europeans that they could be encountered except with a force of man for man. Consequently all dealings of Europeans with native princes had been conducted in a spirit of humility and awe. Even Dupleix, while flaunting his dignity among his brother Nabobs, had courted the ruler of the Carnatic with deference and submission. Now the ice was broken—so momentous was the change wrought by a single Swiss officer, whose very name is hardly known to the nation which now rules India. The memory of Paradis should be honoured in England, since he taught us the secret of the conquest of India.”\*

#### *Remarks.*

It may be objected that Paradis’ attack on Maphuze Khan’s army illustrates a direct tactical stroke on an army greatly superior in numbers rather than a direct strategic advance with inferior forces, and that, therefore, to quote the campaign as an illustration of the principle is out of place. The criticism is just. But it was from this campaign that the British first learnt the fact that a numerically inferior force of Europeans could under certain conditions tactically engage, with equal chances of victory in its favour, an Asiatic force, even when the enemy to be encountered might be in sometimes overwhelming numbers. And from the day that Paradis defeated Maphuze Khan onwards, the knowledge and experience thus acquired induced and led to those bold direct strategic advances on the objective, without taking into account the numbers, discipline, and armament of the enemy, which henceforth was to be so marked a feature of the military history of the Indian army.

The numbers engaged on either side were small, but it must not on that account be imagined that the campaign was unimportant, for the victory of St. Thomé, which brought the

\* Fortescue, “History of the British Army.”

immediate operation to a conclusion, being the first in the Indian Peninsula to illustrate the principle of the "direct advance with inferior forces," had very far-reaching consequences.

**Example of a British General Failing to Make a Direct Advance on the Strategic Objective—the Enemy's Field Force.**

RETREAT OF COLONEL MONSON, JULY AND AUGUST, 1804.

*General Situation.*

Lord Lake, with the Bengal army, about 10,000 strong, advanced from Delhi.

Colonel Murray, with 6,000 men, advanced from Guzerat.

Colonel Monson, with about 3,000 men, moved upon Jainagur to menace the rear of Holkar's army.

The objective of these converging forces was to overrun Holkar's territory in Central India and to destroy and break up, if possible, various large bodies of irregular freebooters, who, taken together, amounted to close upon 100,000 men.

Holkar, in consequence of the above movements, retreated eastward.

Lord Lake captured the fort of Rampoora.

The British general, underestimating the powers and resources of the Mahratta army, recalled all troops into cantonments except those under Colonel Monson, who was left in the province of Malwa, 200 miles south of the British frontier.

Holkar, concentrating his forces, attacked Colonel Monson with overwhelming numbers in his isolated position. A detached force of Holkar's, 5,000 strong, cut off and captured a detached British force of 300 men and six guns. Colonel Fawcett, with five battalions, was at the time within a few miles of this detachment, but made no attempt to avenge the attack and retrieve the disgrace of defeat, and retreated. Colonel Monson, in the meanwhile, was reinforced by troops under General Don. This reinforcement brought his army up to 4,000 men, with 15 guns and 3,000 irregular horse. With this force he advanced through the pass of Mokundra, which commanded the entrance from the westward into Hindustan, and, pushing on fifty miles farther, carried by assault the fortress of Heinglaigush, a stronghold of Holkar's, garrisoned by 1,100 of his best troops. Meanwhile, Holkar was at Malwa with 40,000 men (of whom 20,000 were disciplined infantry) and 160 guns.

Colonel Murray, with a force including 1,500 Europeans, was to have advanced from Guzerat to assist Monson, but, in place of so doing, he was induced to fall back. Monson was thus

left alone to withstand the shock of Holkar's concentrated forces.

*July 6th.*—Holkar was engaged in crossing the Chumbal. Monson allowed this favourable moment for attacking Holkar to pass without taking any advantage of it.

*July 8th.*—Monson commenced a retreat. His irregular cavalry, now 4,000 strong, were "enveloped by clouds of Mahratta cavalry" and cut to pieces.

The infantry and guns made good their retreat to the Mokundra Pass.

Attacks by Holkar's cavalry on the pass were repulsed, but Monson, "despairing of making good the pass when his (Holkar's) infantry and numerous artillery should come up, resumed his retreat a few days after to Kotah, and thence to Rampoora, with great precipitation."\*

Lord Lake, hearing of Monson's retreat, despatched two fresh battalions and 3,000 irregular horse to reinforce him. This reinforcement reached Rampoora a few days after Monson's arrival at that place.

"Still Monson deemed it impossible to make a stand."

*August 21st.*—Leaving a sufficient garrison in the fortress, Monson continued his retreat to the British frontier.

*August 22nd.*—The retreat was delayed by the passage of the River Bannas being so swollen by rains as to be unfordable. Holkar attacked with very superior forces, while the British army was engaged in the passage of the river, and when a greater part had attained the further bank, but a battalion and pickets were still left on the near bank. "With such heroic constancy was this unequal contest maintained by these brave men that they not only repulsed the whole attacks made upon them, but, pursuing their success, captured several of the enemy's guns, an event which clearly demonstrated what results might have followed the adoption of a vigorous offensive at the outset, when the troops were undiminished in strength and unbroken in spirit. As it was, this little phalanx, being unsupported, was unable to follow up its success, and in the course of falling back on the river and effecting their passage had to sustain an arduous conflict and experienced a frightful loss."\*

Captain Nieholl, with the treasure and six companies of sepoys, who crossed the river first, arrived at Khushalghur, where they were treacherously attacked by Scindiah's troops, who were repulsed. Scindiah at this time was in alliance with the British.

The reinforcement of irregular horse, despatched by Lord Lake, deserted to Holkar, as also did some companies of native troops, "shaken by the horrors of the retreat," though, "in

\* Alison, "History of Europe."

general, the conduct of these faithful troops was exemplary in the extreme." "Abandoned by his horse, Colonel Monson, on his route from Khushalghur to the British frontier, formed his whole men into a square, with the ammunition and bullocks in the centre, and in that order retreated for several days, almost always fighting with the enemy and surrounded by 15,000 indefatigable horsemen, who were constantly repulsed with invincible constancy by the rolling fire of the sepoys. At length, however, this vigorous pursuit was discontinued; the firm array of the British dissolved as they entered their own territories; great numbers perished of fatigue or by the sword of their pursuers; others allowed themselves to fall into the hands of the enemy; and the sad remnant of a brilliant division which had mustered with its reinforcements on the retreat, in all 6,000 regular and as many irregular troops, now reduced to 1,000 or 1,200 men, without cannon or ammunition, arrived at Agra in a scattered and disorderly manner about the end of August."\*

Had Monson, with the examples before him of Wellington at Assaye and of Lord Lake at Laswaree (decisive victories which had been won by these two generals a few months previously), in spite of his numerical inferiority, boldly made a direct advance on Holkar, the necessity of a retreat might have been altogether avoided.

To attack an opponent who himself proposes and intends to attack will always disconcert him. For the opponent, meditating and not anticipating an attack, will be usually unprepared for one, and may have made no arrangements for defence. He will then be taken unawares and off his guard. To attack vigorously under such circumstances will lead him to believe that some sudden acquisition of strength has been gained by an enemy whom he intended to attack, hoped to defeat, and then to overwhelm and annihilate in pursuit. To act on the offensive under these conditions, even if not successful, will cause an adversary to be cautious, wary, and guarded in all his future movements, even of pursuit, should a retreat on the part of the attacking force be necessary. It is sometimes better to preface a retreat by an attack than to commence a retrograde step without any offensive movement; for the former proceeding, though loss will be incurred, will act as a cover, under which part, at any rate, of the force intending to retreat may gain time and opportunity to retire in an orderly manner; whereas in the latter proceeding, if the pursuit be vigorous, there is the increased risk of daily losing numbers, not only in actual fighting, but by hunger and thirst, by heat or cold, and by fatigue and hardship, these being the necessary corollaries of all retreats in savage warfare.

\* Alison, *op. cit.*

## FIRST AFGHAN WAR—THE RETREAT FROM KABUL, 1842.

It is beyond the scope of this work to relate the circumstances leading to the outbreak at Kabul, the causes of the rebellion, the particulars of the siege of the cantonments, in which the British forces had taken refuge; the murder of the two chief political officers, Sir William Macnaghten and Sir Alexander Burnes; the negotiations and political intrigues between the British political authorities on the one hand and the Afghan chiefs on the other.

It is sufficient to say that after a siege of about two months (November–December, 1841) the British garrison capitulated, and, on the promise of the Afghan chiefs that a strong escort should be provided to protect the march of the British army through the formidable defiles which lay between Kabul and Jellalabad, then garrisoned by a British force under General Sale, undertook to withdraw to the latter place.

"From Kabul to Jellalabad the route presents a continuous series of tedious and difficult passes, those chiefly worthy of mention being the Khurd Kabul, Haft Kotul, Tiyin, Jagdalluck and Gundamuk."\*

At the time of the year the retreat took place (January), snow lay on the ground, and partly blocked the passes; the cold was intense, and but little if any supplies were procurable on the route. The inhabitants of the country were extremely unfriendly, and in spite of Afghan promises, it was certain that the force would be attacked.

Not only had there been differences of opinion throughout the siege between the British envoy, Sir William Macnaghten, and General Elphinstone, the Commander, but there was also dissension and a want of unity between General Elphinstone and his second in command, Brigadier Shelton. General Elphinstone, if only owing to his physical infirmitiess, was quite unequal to the command. The defence of the cantonments during the siege had been badly conducted. The garrison were enfeebled from want of supplies. Men and officers were disengaged; discipline had relapsed. In the above circumstances it is easy to perceive that the retreat from its commencement laboured under unfavourable conditions.

The strength of the force amounted roughly to 4,500 fighting men, and some 12,000 followers, besides women and children.

*Brief Outline of the Retreat to Jellalabad.*

*January 6th.*—The retreat from Kabul commenced. The force reached Baigram, a distance of five miles only from Kabul. On this the first day of the march, the Afghans already com-

\* Kaye, "History of the War in Afghanistan."

menaced plundering the long baggage trains, and Ghazis made many attacks on the column.

*January 7th.*—Bhuta-i-kak, at the entrance to the Khurd Kabul Pass, was reached. This place was five miles from the last camp, so that in two days the total distance covered by the British forces was ten miles only. The cold was intense, and many died from exposure. The fighting men could scarcely hold their arms.

*January 8th.*—Passage of the Khurd Kabul Pass. “For five miles this pass runs between precipitous mountain ranges, so narrow and so shut in on either side that the wintry sun rarely penetrates its gloomy recesses.” The retiring column was this day heavily attacked, and, as may be imagined, in a defile of the nature described, suffered enormous losses.

*January 9th.*—Halt at Khurd Kabul. The delay on this day was fatal. By it the Afghans were enabled to concentrate on and block the passes which still remained to be negotiated. Ladies and children, and husbands of married ladies with the force, surrendered to the enemy. There were severe losses from the bitter cold.

*January 10th.*—Passage of the Haft-i-Kotal. Further general massacre took place.

*Night of 10th-11th.*—March to Kutter Sung. Further losses were inflicted by the enemy.

*January 11th.*—Remnants of the force reach Jugdulluck.

*January 12th.*—Halt at Jugdulluck during the day. In the evening the march was resumed, and the passage of the Jugdulluck Pass, which near its summit was found to be barricaded, was attempted. At this barrier it may be said the force ceased to exist, for a few officers and men only succeeded in forcing the barricade and in struggling on to Gundamuk. On this day, Generals Elphinstone and Shelton surrendered themselves as hostages.

*January 13th.*—Gundamuk was reached by a few stragglers, who were there cut up. Six officers reached Futtehabad, sixteen miles from Jellalabad, and of them one only succeeded in reaching Jellalabad.

“The history of India recorded no blow so humiliating to our power, and so full of dishonour to our arms, as that which had crowned Mahomed Akbar with renown, and raised the hopes of all hostile to British supremacy in the East. Its moral effect in damping the confidence of the native army was out of all proportion to the loss sustained; for though in reality, as compared with masses of troops in British pay, a mere handful of men had been destroyed, yet this had occurred under circumstances of such supreme disgrace that the sepoys drooped beneath the doubt whether the spirit of Lake, Wellesley, and

Ochterlony had passed for ever away from the colours emblazoned with the record of their victories. Commanders of a different stamp seemed to sway the destinies of our armies; and the old spirit which inspired daring thoughts and brilliant deeds had been replaced by a mediocrity, or imbecility, which recklessly cast away the pride and fame of the soldier, to be trodden under foot by the foe he had conquered."\*

After Paradis' success in 1746, there followed a series of campaigns crowned by glorious victories. Since these form a not uninteresting, and certainly a magnificent record, an enumeration of some of them will constitute a fitting close to this chapter. First in order come the various campaigns, which include the victories of Kauveripak, 1752; Plassey, 1757; Wandewash, 1760; Undwah Nullah, 1763. The record was then broken by Colonel Baillie's defeat, 1780—a disaster due partly to Hyder Ali's skilful strategic manœuvre of interposing between the two separated forces of Monro and Baillie, and crushing the latter with overwhelming numbers, in spite of a gallant and prolonged struggle, but mainly to the former officer's not marching at once against Hyder Ali during his attack on Baillie's weak and separated army, and so extricating the latter from his dangerous position. However, Baillie's defeat was followed by the victories of Pollilore, 1781; Porto Novo, 1781; Assaye and Laswarce, 1803. The sequence of success was then broken for the second time by Monson's disastrous retreat in 1804, the details of which have already been described. But Mahidpoor, 1817, Koregaum, 1818, and other successes take the record up to 1842, the year of the retreat from Kabul to Jellalabad, the unfortunate consequences of which may be ascribed to the failure of the British troops to move out from their cantonments and attack the Afghan forces. The "illustrious garrison" of Jellalabad were relieved, however, by Pollock's direct advance from Peshawur through the Khyber, and the next year witnessed one of the most conspicuous examples of the application of this principle of the direct advance, namely, the battle of Meanee, 1843, fought and won by Sir Charles Napier against terrific odds. Then come in quick succession the victories of the campaigns against the Sikhs in the Punjab—namely, Moodkee, 1845; Ferozeslah, 1845; Aliwal, 1846; Sobraon, 1846; Gujerat, 1849; and finally the victories of the Indian Mutiny. Not in all, but in the great majority of these campaigns, the direct advance was the principle of manœuvre adopted. The lesson taught by Paradis was not forgotten, and when the principle was not applied, as in the case of both Monro and Monson, the result was defeat.

\* Durand.

## Part II.

### INFLUENCES WHICH AFFECT THE PRINCIPLES OF STRATEGIC MANŒUVRE.

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#### CHAPTER VII.

##### STRATEGIC OBSTACLES.

Preliminary Remarks—Various Classifications of Obstacles—Obstacles in Offensive and in Defensive Strategy—The Talavera Campaign (1809)—As an Example of the Influence of Mountain Barriers and Rivers.

##### Preliminary Remarks.

THERE are two descriptions of strategic obstacles.

- I Natural.
- II. Artificial

Natural obstacles are geographical features of the earth's surface, such as mountain barriers, rivers, deserts, and marshes.

Artificial obstacles are made by man, such as fortified towns, entrenched camps, bridge-heads, etc.

In addition to natural and artificial obstacles, sudden climatic changes, such as storms or mists, are also obstacles, for all these vitally affect the movements of troops.

The expression "obstacle," as a military definition, is usually limited to natural geographical features, such as mountain barriers, rivers, deserts, and swamps. But the definition "obstacle" in its literal meaning is misleading, for a chain of mountains, a river, or a desert, may, if put to proper uses, and under certain conditions, *aid* just as much as under other conditions they may *obstruct* or *hinder* strategic combinations.

Hence, as obstacles, mountain barriers, rivers, deserts, etc., are divided into two classes, namely:—

1. Hindering obstacles, or
2. Aiding obstacles.

Again, according to the direction of the natural feature in question across the sphere of operations, such natural feature will be either—

- (a) A transverse obstacle.
- (b) A parallel obstacle.

Therefore "obstacles" may be broadly divided into four classes.

- I. Hindering transverse obstacles.
- II. Hindering parallel obstacles.
- III. Aiding transverse obstacles.
- IV. Aiding parallel obstacles.

*In Offensive Strategy.*—Both rivers and mountains are *hindering transverse obstacles* when they have to be crossed by the column or columns of the force advancing.

They are turned into *aiding transverse obstacles* when, having been successfully crossed, the various bridges and passes are in secure possession of the advancing columns, for they then cover a certain area of operations, and permit of that area being defended by a less number of men than would otherwise have to be employed. They frequently shorten and protect a line of communications.

Both are *hindering parallel obstacles* when they limit a strategic front, or compel a division of forces to act on either side of the obstacle, which are thereby unable to maintain, or can only with difficulty maintain, connection with each other, or when, their exits being in possession of an enemy, they flank a line of advance.

Both are *parallel aiding obstacles* when they protect a flank.

*In Defensive Strategy.*—Both are *aiding obstacles, transverse or parallel*, when they have to be passed by the enemy; when they protect a flank, or area of operations of the defence; when they shorten or assist by their direction in safeguarding the line of communications of the defence.

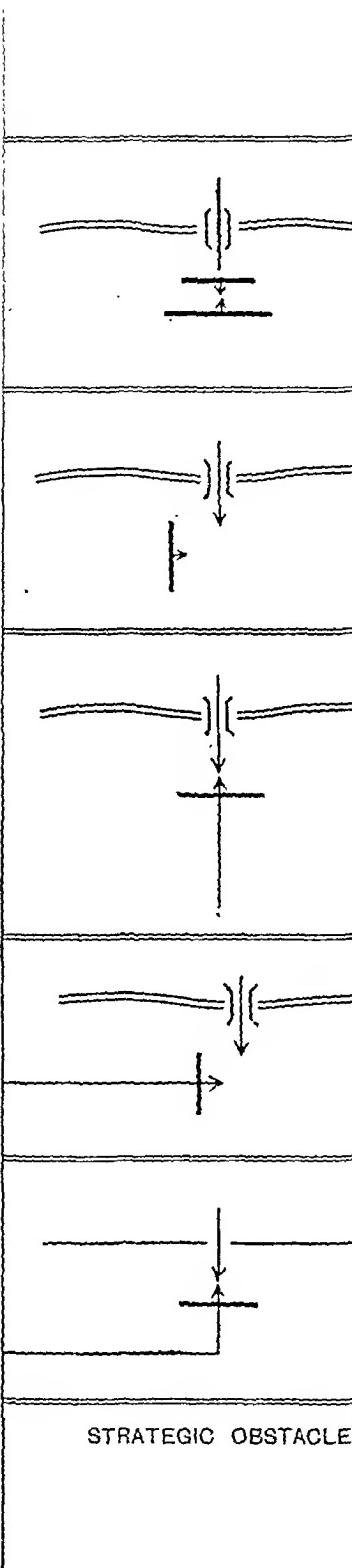
Both are *hindering obstacles, parallel or transverse*, as the case may be, when they afford protection to an enemy by covering his flank, by shortening and protecting his line of communications.

Plate V., Figs. 1 to 3, will help to make the meaning clearer.

In Plate V., Fig. 1, the river A B is a hindering transverse obstacle, for its course cuts perpendicularly the line of advance of Red, and Red to reach his objective must cross the river, the passages over which will undoubtedly be defended by Blue.

In Plate V., Fig. 2, the course of the mountains A B, the passages over which are few and difficult, is a hindering parallel obstacle to Blue, for (1) if Blue keeps to one or other side of the mountains only, Red can equally concentrate more troops on the menaced side. (2) On the other hand, if Blue divides his forces and advances on both sides of the range, Blue lays himself open to being beaten in detail.

In Plate V., Fig. 1, the river A B cuts the line of operations of Red at right angles. But Red, *having passed* the river, and





secured the points of passage on either flank, secures his line of communications from its starting point up to the river, for Blue must cross the river to menace Red's line. Not only does Red secure this advantage, but he obtains another, in that by advancing his base to the river he shortens his line of communications. The river is turned from a "hindering transverse obstacle" to an "aiding transverse obstacle."

In Plate V., Fig. 3, the mountain barrier c d protects the right flank of Red in his advance towards his objective. The mountains are an "aiding parallel obstacle," but Red must take care he is not driven on them by an attack on his left flank, as shown by the line A B; Red must secure the passes over c d, otherwise his line of communications may be cut, or his future movements may be much hampered and interfered with by raids or strokes against his line of communications, made by forces of the enemy issuing from c d.

As a general example of what has so far been said, a glance at a map of the Iberian peninsula (Map I.) will show that the main mountain chains and great rivers run generally in an easterly and westerly direction. Thus to a French force based on the line of the Pyrenees, and marching south towards Madrid as an objective, the mountains and rivers successively form *hindering transverse obstacles*. The Pyrenees, crossed by no great roads, are themselves an obstacle so formidable as to "forbid the supply of large bodies of troops except by roads which lie at the extremities of the mountains and the coast at each side." Thus these mountains limit the opening movements of a campaign to the main roads which connect Bayonne with the north of Spain at their western extremity, and the south-east of France with the north-east of Spain at their eastern extremity.

Again, to a force operating from Portugal in an easterly direction, the same physical features are *parallel*, not *transverse*, obstacles, hindering or aiding according to the uses they are put to.

And, again, like the Pyrenees, "the frontier of Portugal is so rigid" as to admit of only two roads by which Lisbon can be reached from Madrid. Hence the importance of the two fortresses of Badajos and Ciudad Rodrigo, commanding the two issues between Spain and Portugal.

From what has so far been said it is apparent that mountain barriers and rivers exercise two great influences on all strategic manœuvres.

First, an influence connected with their *direction*.

Second, an influence connected with the *nature* and *character* of the obstacle itself.

Where obstacles traverse a theatre of operations, every strategic manœuvre is modified and affected by the direction

and by the nature of the obstacles in question, for they impose limitations not only on the movements, but on the numerical strength of the forces engaged.

Roads naturally converge for the passing a mountain barrier, by the easiest defile, or over the lowest pass, and for the passage of rivers at the bridges, and that the number of passages will be proportionate to the nature of the physical difficulties to be surmounted. The higher and more inaccessible the mountain ranges, and the broader or deeper the rivers, the fewer the points of passage.

Such passages are decisive strategical points.

The natural obstacles which present themselves on every theatre of war must be minutely scrutinised by the student of the operations of war. He must take into due account the influence which their direction will exercise on every move he makes; the facilities and difficulties of crossing which they present to both forces must not be overlooked, but must be accurately estimated, for they will affect, in a smaller or greater degree, every combination and concentration which it is the intention of either leader to bring about.

It is by the proper use of accidents of ground, by a knowledge of the effects of obstacles on strategic manœuvres, and by an accurate estimate of what actually at the time are, or will ultimately become, decisive strategical points, that all celebrated generals of the world have formed those tactical and strategical combinations which have led to the obtaining of their greatest victories.

The offensive passage of an obstacle may be effected by three methods :

By force alone.

By force and stratagem.

By stratagem.\*

Of these the last is the most preferable, as the losses should, if the stratagem employed be successful, be inconsiderable, and the army is fresh for further operations.

The passage of the Tugela at Colenso is an example where the employment of force alone resulted in failure.

The forcing of the Modder River by Lord Methuen, effected at the end of a hard day's battle, is an example of success; but the losses incurred during the day, and the exhaustion of the troops when fighting ceased in the evening, were so great as to forbid any immediate further advance towards the relief of Kimberley, the objective of Lord Methuen's operations. The success, therefore, was a negative one.

It is doubtful whether, owing to the great improvement

\* Bigelow, in "Principles of Strategy," states that throughout the four years' war in America there is no single instance of a river being "forced."

and long-ranging power of the weapons of modern times, this method will in the future ever be successful unless the attacking side possess great preponderance in numbers.

Marlborough's passage of the lines of Mehaigne, 1704, and of the lines of Bouchain, 1711, are examples respectively of passing an obstacle by force and stratagem, and by stratagem.

The lines of Mehaigne, extending from Namur to Antwerp, were naturally and artificially very strong. They were defended by 70,000 French troops under Villeroy. But Marlborough, by a movement towards his left, induced Villeroy to concentrate on his (Villeroy's) right. Then the British general, by a sudden and secret movement towards his own right, arrived at the point where he had originally intended to cross. Here the force defending the passage was weak. Marlborough, overcoming the resistance offered, penetrated the lines, and the French were compelled to abandon a position which it had taken them three years to construct.

As a stratagem, the forcing of the lines of Bouchain was still more remarkable. These lines extended from Namur to the coast of Picardy. They, too, were naturally and artificially very strong, and were defended by 100,000 men under Marshal Villars, who wrote to Versailles that he had brought Marlborough to his *ne plus ultra*. Marlborough succeeded in completely deceiving both friend and foe as to his real point of attack, and Villars utterly failed to penetrate his design. After a series of manœuvres, which were but feints, Marlborough penetrated the lines unopposed, and thus compelled the French marshal "to abandon the barrier whose strength he had too hastily vaunted."

Obstacles increase the means of passive resistance, but as no campaign was won by opposition of this nature, this is not the true use of obstacles.

Their best effect will be :—

"*Offensively*. To give their possessor increased power of manœuvring offensively and of taking the enemy at a disadvantage.

"*Defensively*. To cover a flank movement.

"To afford opportunity for rallying a beaten army.

"To enable part of an army to hold a forward line and protect territory till reinforcements arrive.

"To enable a rearguard to cover a retreat."\*

As a general example of the influence of mountain barriers and rivers as obstacles both hindering and aiding and transverse and parallel, perhaps no better selection can be made than the campaign of Talavera, 1809, a short description of which is now given.

\* Hamley, "Operations of War."

## TALAVERA CAMPAIGN, 1809. (MAP III.)

*Allied Army—Three Bases.*

British forces under Wellington, based on Portugal.

First Spanish army under Cuesta, based on Estremadura.

Second Spanish army under Venegas, based on La Mancha.

*Strength (approximate only).\**—British army organised in 6 brigades artillery, 3 brigades cavalry, and 5 divisions infantry, with 30 guns. Total, 30,000 men.

Cuesta's army, 38,000 men.

Venegas' army, 25,000 men.

Grand total, 86,000 to 90,000 men.

*Allied Army's Plan of Campaign.*—The common objective of all three armies was Madrid.

The British army, by the line of Castello Branco, Coria, and Placencia, was to unite with Cuesta's army in the valley of the Tagus.

The junction of the two armies effected, both were to march on Madrid.

Venegas' army from La Mancha was to co-operate by marching also on Madrid.

*French Forces.*

King Joseph in command, with Jourdan as his military adviser, Victor and Sebastiani directly defended Madrid. Approximate strength eventually concentrated for defence of the capital, 50,000 men with 90 pieces of artillery.

*Soult's Army.*—The Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps, scattered in the northern provinces of Spain, were after various hindrances concentrated under command of Soult. Strength, 70,000 well-equipped men.

*Description of the Valley of the Tagus.*

Bounded on the south by the Sierra Toledo, Sierra Guadeloupe, Mirza d'Ibor, and Mirabete Mountains.

Bounded on the north by the Sierra Guadarrama, Sierra Gredas, Sierra Lanes, and the Sierra de Gata. These mountains are practically impassable, except at certain known passes. Of these the principal are:—

1. The road from Ciudad Rodrigo to Alacantara *via* Perales.
2. The road from Salamanca to Placencia *via* the Pass of Banos.
3. From Avila to the Vera de Placencia.
4. From Avila to the valley of the River Tietar *via* Arenas.
5. From Segovia to Madrid.

The River Tagus and the mountain chains which bound the valley on the north and south respectively, as regards the

\* Napier, "History of the War in the Peninsula."

operations of the allied army and the French army under Joseph, are parallel obstacles.

The angles formed by the Rivers Tietar and Alberche, which join in on the right bank of the Tagus, are so acute with respect to that river, that these two tributaries may also be regarded as parallel obstacles. The River Guadarama, on the other hand, is a transverse obstacle.

*Opening Movements.—Phase I.*

Cuesta crossed the Tagus at Almaraz on June 23rd with 38,000 men, but let slip a favourable opportunity of crushing Victor in an advanced position on the River Tietar, in that he permitted that general with only 14,000 men to make a flank march for three days, only 12 miles from his (Cuesta's) position.

*June 27th.*—The English army marched into Spain by the route *viā* Castello Branco and Coria.

*June 28th.*—Victor took post behind the River Alberche, his advanced guard being at Talavera. He watched the River Tagus on the left from the mouth of the River Alberche to the mouth of the River Guadarama. His right was covered by detachments at Escalona.

*July 10th.*—The British Army arrived at Placencia. Cuesta was at Almaraz, Victor at Talavera. Second, Fifth, and Sixth French Corps in Galicia and Leon.

Wellington, misled by false information, greatly underestimated the French forces concentrating in the northern Spanish provinces under Soult. He placed them at 15,000 men, whereas they amounted to 70,000 well-equipped men. Relying on the impracticability of the mountains on his left flank, and so using them as an aiding parallel obstacle, Wellington made the following dispositions to watch the passes:—

1. Beresford with the Portuguese to watch the Ciudad Rodrigo-Aleantara road.

2. He requested Cuesta to defend the Banos Pass. That general at first demurred, then consented, and finally sent a miserably inadequate force of 600 men, with 20 rounds of ammunition, to defend a most important strategic point, which once in possession of the enemy would enable him to make a direct stroke at the line of communications of the British forces—a convincing proof, if any were needed, of his incapacity. It had been well for Wellington had he provided for the defence of the pass from his own army in spite of numerically weakening that army, instead of trusting to the Spanish general. But at this period Wellington had not proved the unreliability of the Spaniards.

*July 18th.*—The British army crossed the River Tietar.

*July 20th.*—Wellington and Cuesta effected a junction at Oropesa.

*Phase II.*

*July 21st.*—Wellington halted at Oropesa.

Cuesta marched to Velada.

The French changed their line of retreat back to Madrid from the Madrid to the Toledo road.

Wilson in command of 4,000 Spanish irregular troops had in the meanwhile joined in the operations. This officer ascended the right bank of the River Tietar and gained the Pass of Arenas, which led on Avila, and the Pass of San Pedro Bernardo, which led upon Madrid. He thus covered the Vera de Placencia, and menaced Victor's communications with Madrid.

*July 22nd.*—Cuesta attacked Victor's rearguard. Victor took post behind the River Alberche.

*July 23rd and 24th.*—Wellington was still ignorant of Soult's movements north of the Pass of Banos.

Wilson was at Escalona.

The French withdrew from the River Alberche to Torrijos.

*July 25th.*—Cuesta crossed the River Alberche, sending one column to Torrijos, another to St. Olalla.

Wellington, constrained to support this movement, despatched two British Infantry Divisions and all the cavalry across the River Alberche to Cazalgas.

Wilson moved to Naval Carneiro.

Joseph and Victor concentrated; Sebastiani also, leaving 3,000 men at Toledo in order to compel Venegas, should he advance, to cross the River Tagus higher up at Aranjuez, joined Joseph and Victor.

Total French forces now concentrated and directly defending Madrid amounted to 50,000 men and 90 guns, assembled on the line of the Guadarama.

Napoleon from Ratisbon, in South Germany, foreseeing probable events, wrote thus to Soult:—

"Wellington will probably advance by the Tagus against Madrid; in that case fall on his flank and rear and crush him."

This advice Soult proceeded to carry out. He succeeded in falling on Wellington's flank and rear, but it will be seen hereafter how, by the use of the parallel obstacle, the River Tagus, and the mountains bounding the valley of that river on the south, Wellington escaped the consequences of Soult's stroke at his line of communications.

*Soult's Movements.*

The Second, Fifth, and Sixth French Corps were placed under command of Soult, who after great difficulty, owing to obstruction on the part of Ney, succeeded in a (partial) concentration of

these corps, and directed them on the Pass of Banos, having first come to the correct conclusion that the British objective was Madrid and not the line of the River Douro.

*July 26th.*—The Allies were in four separate bodies, under command of Wellington, Cuesta, Venegas, and Wilson. The French immediately protecting Madrid were concentrated. Soult was in movement towards the Pass of Banos. The French recrossed the River Guadarama in force, and drove back the Spaniards. The combat of Alcabon was fought, in which the Spanish were defeated and driven back, but their retreat was covered and supported by Wellington.

*July 27th.*—The French following up the Spaniards, the combat of Salinas, in advance of the Talavera position selected by Wellington, ensued, resulting in a further retirement of the allied army on to the Talavera position.

On the evening of this day an assault by the French on the position itself took place, but the French were repulsed.

*July 28th.*—Two separate assaults on the Talavera position (battle of Talavera), which were both repulsed, were made by the French.

*July 29th.*—Wellington and Cuesta remained at Talavera; Wellington was reinforced by General Crauford with the Light Brigade.

Venegas was at Ocaña with outposts at Aranjuez.

The French army under Joseph, with four corps, guards and reserve, retired to St. Olalla.

*July 30th.*—Wellington and Cuesta still halted at Talavera.

Soult forced the Pass of Banos.

*July 31st.*—The leading French corps of Soult's army arrived at Placencia.

*August 1st.*—Joseph moved to Illescas to intercept Venegas' march on Madrid. Victor on the River Alberche.

Wilson moved to Escalona, in consequence of which move Victor imagined the whole English army was on the march to Madrid, and consequently retired *via* Maqueda.

*August 2nd.*—Venegas concentrated at Aranjuez.

Wilson moved to Nombella.

*August 3rd.*—Wellington to Oropesa.

The French corps, under Soult, passed the River Tictar and entered Toril and Navalnoral. This move cut Wellington's communications with Almaraz by the north bank of the Tagus.

### Phase III.

Position as follows:—

*Allied Army*—Cuesta at Talavera, Wellington at Oropesa: 47,000 men.

Wilson was at Nombella: 4,000 men.

Venegas' advanced guard was at Puente Largo, the main body between Aranjuez and Ocaña: 25,000 men.

*French Army*—Joseph and Sebastiani at Illescas, Victor at Maqueda: 37,000 men. Soult on the River Tietar: 53,000 men.

Wellington's and Cuesta's armies were separated by one day's march.

Joseph and Soult were three days' march apart.

All commanders were ignorant of the strength, movements, and positions of their adversaries—an illustration of the "fog of war."

Wellington was still under the impression that Soult's army numbered 15,000 men only.

*August 4th.*—Wellington became enlightened as to the French dispositions and numbers.

Cuesta abandoned Talavera, and was in march towards Arzobispo and Oropeza.

Cuesta desired to fight Soult at Oropeza. Wellington opposed this plan, and stated his determination in any case to retreat *via* Arzobispo over the Tagus, and to occupy the Col de Mirabete as his line of defence, before the French could occupy that ridge, *via* Almaraz, which, if they succeeded in doing, would cut him off from his alternative line of retreat to Portugal *via* Truxillo and Merida.

British commenced the passage of the Tagus.

Joseph moved to Mostoles, thinking that the British were advancing by their left on Madrid.

Sebastiani at Illescas.

*August 5th.*—The British crossed the Tagus and moved towards Deleytoza.

Crauford's brigade to Almaraz to secure the bridge at that place.

Victor to Talavera.

Joseph concentrated at Valdemoro.

Venegas' advanced guard was driven back across the Tagus.

*August 6th.*—The French drove the Spanish rearguard across the bridge of Arzobispo.

Victor occupied Talavera, capturing the English sick and wounded, who had been abandoned by Cuesta.

*August 7th.*—Victor crossed the Tagus at Talavera, and pushed down left bank of the river towards Aldea Nueva.

British rearguard held Mirza d'Ibor.

*August 8th.*—Soult, surprising the Spanish rearguard, forced the Arzobispo bridge. He called on Victor to march on Guadalupe and Deleytoza, stating his intention of supporting that movement with his own forces.

Ney's corps, *via* Almaraz, to seize the Mirabete.

*August 9th.*—Wellington at Deleytoza learnt of the French success at Arzobispo.

Venegas' left flank was driven back by Sebastiani upon the River Guazalate.

*August 10th.*—Wellington personally proceeded to Mirza d'Ibor and found the country covered with Spanish fugitives.

Venegas concentrated at Almonacid.

*August 11th.*—The allied army re-established its line on the mountains. The British guarded Almaraz on the left flank, the Spaniards occupied Camillo in the centre, and Mirza d'Ibor on the right.

In securing this position the allied army was helped by the French movements, for:—

1. Ney failed to cross the Tagus at Almaraz.
2. Joseph recalled Victor to support four French corps against Venegas.

Venegas was defeated at Almonacid.

*August 12th.*—Cuesta resigned command of his army and was succeeded by Equia.

The allied position on the Mirza d'Ibor and Mirabete was safe, for if the French passed at Almaraz they would be "huddled in a dangerous manner in contracted ground between the Mirza, the Mirabete, and the river: they could not pass between Almaraz and Arzobispo, and on the right the Mirza was impregnable."

Soult, thwarted in effecting the passage of the Tagus at Arzobispo and Almaraz, conjectured that Wellington would repass the Tagus at Alcantara to rejoin Beresford, who had marched *via* Perales, and on the 12th was at Maraleja. He proposed to march upon Coria with the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps, for at Coria he would threaten both Beresford's and Wellington's communications with Lisbon. Ney refused to consent to this plan and marched with the Sixth Corps for Valladolid *via* the Pass of Banos. This pass he found occupied by Wilson, whom, however, he defeated, traversed the pass, and recovered the line of the River Tormes.

*August 20th.*—The British army quitted Jaraicejo.

*August 24th.*—Wellington, moving *via* Truxillo, arrived at Merida.

The Spaniards relieved the Light Brigade at Almaraz. The Light Brigade moved to Alcantara.

To revert to Wilson, whom Ney found in occupation of the Pass of Banos on his way to the line of the River Tormes. How did Wilson get to Banos? As this leader's movements are extremely interesting they are given in detail as described by Napier. "That partisan (Wilson), being at Nombella when the British army left Talavera, had been put in communication with

Cuesta, and on his retreat had also retired to Velada, a few miles north of Talavera, from whence, being only 24 miles from Arzobispo, as Cuesta did not entirely pass the Tagus until the 6th, he could have joined Sir Arthur; but he knew not this, and prudently crossing the River Tietar made for the mountains, trusting to his activity for escaping. Villatte had pursued him on the 5th to Nombella; a detachment from Avila watched for him in the passes of Arenas and Monbeltran; Foy waited for him in the Vera de Placencia; nevertheless, he broke through their circle at Viandar, passed the Gredos at a ridge called the Sierra de Lanes, and getting into the valley of the Tormes reached Bejar. From thence, thinking to recover his communications with the army, he marched towards Placencia, by the Pass of Banos, and thus met Ney returning to the Salamanca country."\*

#### *Remarks.*

The campaign of Talavera is one of the most interesting and at the same time one of the most complex campaigns ever fought by a British general, and illustrates several principles of strategy.

The three allied armies under Wellington, Cuesta and Venegas started from three divergent bases, Portugal, Estremadura and La Mancha, having Madrid as their common objective. Madrid was defended by French forces under Joseph and Victor. The allied army were on "exterior" lines; Joseph on "interior" lines. The forces of France were in addition assisted by a second army under Soult, who not only made a direct stroke at the lines of communications of one army, the British—and that the most efficient of the allied armies—but carried that stroke to its logical conclusion by cutting the British army off from its base.

This Soult accomplished when he arrived at Placencia, for, at this town, he cut the British line *via* Coria to Castello Branco, and arrived at Navalnoral he cut the British retreat to the south bank of the Tagus by the bridge at Almaraz.

Wellington and Cuesta, originally on exterior lines as regards their objective Madrid, owing to Soult's participation in the combination were themselves by Soult's movement placed on "interior" lines; for the allied army, after the retirement from Talavera to the position occupied to cover the bridge at Arzobispo, was on "interior" lines as compared with the French under Joseph and Victor at Talavera and Toledo, and with Soult on the River Tietar, for it was then open to Wellington from his central position, combined with Cuesta, to strike alternative blows to right and left with a force superior at points of contact, but inferior on the whole to the French armies. Having experienced that no reliance was to be placed on Spanish leaders and armies, he preferred to retreat over the Tagus.

\* Napier, "History of the War in the Peninsula."

The campaign illustrates the influences on strategy of many of the factors noted in Chapter I.

1. *Political considerations.*—Venegas' half-hearted advance on Madrid was due to political intrigues, for the Junta had secretly ordered him not to fulfil his proper rôle in the combination.

2. *Incapacity of the General.*—Cuesta was manifestly unfitted for his position.

3. *Resources of theatre of operations.*—The Spaniards failed to carry out their promises as to supplies. This failure on their part heavily crippled Wellington all through the campaign, for the resources of the country were unequal to the strain of feeding the British army.

4. *False information.*—Wellington received false information as to Soult which not only led him into error as regards that general's movements, but caused him greatly to underestimate the strength of the forces at his (Soult's) disposal.

5. *Friction between Commanders.*—Cuesta was Wellington's inferior in every way, but he refused to defer to the British general's suggestions and followed his own counsel regardless of the consequences. The jealousy of French marshals also hindered and interrupted their combinations.

Finally, as to obstacles, of the influence of which on strategy this campaign is more especially given as an illustration.

(1) The River Tagus was a parallel obstacle, by the clever use of which Wellington extricated himself from his difficulties, and skilfully effected his retreat from overwhelming converging French forces. He turned what was originally a parallel obstacle into an aiding transverse obstacle with respect to his own army, a hindering transverse obstacle as regarded the French forces.

(2) In spite of his line of communications with Portugal by the northern or right bank of the Tagus being cut, Wellington, owing to the direction of the river through the theatre of operations, was enabled to make a change in his line of retreat, and to take up an alternative line on the left or south bank of the river.

(3) As with the River Tagus, so with the mountain chains Mirza d'Ibor and the Mirabete. Wellington put these mountains to the same use: originally parallel obstacles only, they were employed with the greatest advantage and success as transverse hindering obstacles.

(4) That part of the Tagus which traversed the sphere of operations, being unnavigable, could not be used as a line of communications. In this the difference between the Tagus and a river like the Nile is very marked.

5. On the other hand, owing to the parallel course of the Sierra de Gata, Sierra Gredos and Sierra Lanes, and the general

impracticability of these mountains, except for a few passes, the defence of which he considered he had amply arranged for, Wellington deemed his left flank was safe. In this he made a mistake. His allies, to whom the defence of the Pass of Banos had been entrusted, again failed him.

(6) The parallel courses of the Rivers Tietar and Alberche were very favourable to Wilson's movements. On the line of the former river he, at one phase of the campaign, threatened Victor's communications with Madrid. "Victor was alarmed lest a movement of the British army in the same direction should in a few marches nullify his position on the River Alberche and intercept his retreat to Madrid." The parallel course of the River Tietar enabled Wilson to advance on the French right flank to within a close distance of the capital, and actually to establish communication with it.

When the combined army retreated from Talavera, Wilson was at Nombella, and Victor was again misled into the belief that the British army was advancing, not retiring, as it actually was, to Madrid.

Suppose the River Tietar, instead of joining the Tagus at an angle so acute with that river that it was used as a parallel aiding obstacle, had joined the Tagus at right angles. It would have been a transverse obstacle to the allies, the passage of which they would have been compelled to force, for along and behind its line Victor and Joseph would probably have concentrated, as they eventually did behind the River Guadarama. In this event it is unlikely that any forward movement of Wilson outflanking the right of Victor's forces would have been possible.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS AS OBSTACLES.

Mountain Barriers and Rivers as Strategic Obstacles—The Defensive: Passage of the Douro (1809)—General Remarks—The Offensive: Passage of the Chenab (1848) — General Remarks—Passage of the Adour and the Gaves (1814)—Strategy of Mountain Warfare: The Tirah Expedition (1897)—Value of Navigable Rivers as Lines of Operations and of Communications: The River Culum in the Advance towards Khartoum for the Relief of General Gordon.

#### A General Comparison of Mountain Barriers and Rivers Considered as Strategic Obstacles.

1. THE population along the banks of a river, and in the valley through which the river runs, will always be comparatively greater than the population to be found on mountain ranges. Hence communication between the inhabitants on both banks of a river being a greater necessity, there will be more bridges by which a river can be passed than there will be roads over mountain ranges by which those ranges can be traversed, along a distance the same in both cases.

2. If there be boats (and there always will be boats on important rivers), and if these boats be procurable, in addition to the points of passage by means of the permanent bridges and by fords, rivers may be crossed at any point, but mountain barriers can, as a rule, only be traversed by large masses of men by the main roads which lead over the easier passes.

3. In addition to the more numerous points at which a river may be crossed, noted above in 1 and 2, armies are accompanied by pontoons. Thus extra and rapid facilities for crossing a river are available. An army may construct a mountain road as an extra means of traversing the barrier, but the construction of such roads is difficult, requires time to complete, and it is usually impossible to keep their construction secret.

4. Lateral communications along river banks always exist, and will be more direct than the lateral communications along the foot of mountain ranges; for in the latter case, roads must curve to avoid the spurs which project from the main range, or if not, and the lateral roads pass over these projecting spurs, such roads are themselves mountain roads, and though they may

be direct, yet they take more time and are more difficult to traverse than corresponding level roads along a river's banks.

Facilities for communication, both perpendicular and lateral, especially predominate in the case of rivers which traverse richly cultivated and populous valleys.

5. Supplies in the valleys through which rivers run will naturally be greater and easier to procure than on mountain ranges.

6. The climate and temperature in valleys will be more equitable than on mountain tops. The privations and hardships in unseasonable climates to which men on high mountain ranges are exposed, are very great. In valleys, the conditions of life, whether in camp or bivouac, are not so grievous to endure as those which have to be supported by troops under the same conditions operating in mountain ranges.

7. A landing on the further bank of a river once secured, the passage of a river by an ordinary or pontoon bridge can be more quickly effected, and will be more certain, than would be the passage of a mounted defile by the same number of troops. Thus the time occupied in effecting the passage of a mountain barrier or river is in favour of the river, and this will be the more so the greater the number of troops which have to pass.

8. As screens, and for delaying, covering, and protective purposes, mountain barriers are of more value than rivers, but for purposes of manœuvring offensively, rivers can be put to greater uses than *mountain* barriers.

It follows from 1 and 2 that, there being more numerous points by which a river may be crossed, it is easier to deceive an enemy as to the real point of passage in the case of a river than in the case of a mountain barrier.

Also, from 1, 2, 3, and 4, that owing to facilities for communication, the preliminary combinations for the passage of an obstacle are in favour of a river rather than of a mountain barrier.

From 5 and 6, that the concentration of large masses of troops in valleys is possible, but the concentration of equal numbers of troops in mountain ranges is unusual, owing to the great difficulties of keeping them in good health and of supplying them with food.

With regard to 4, in the case of mountain barriers, when an army is once committed to a certain line by which to pass the obstacle, the situation, for the defence, is sooner cleared up, since it is more difficult for the offence to change that line, should events not progress favourably, than would be the case in an advance fort he passage of a river.

Finally, combinations for the concentration of troops, both to force and defend a passage, can be calculated with far greater accuracy and certainty in the case of rivers than of mountain barriers.

It may be argued that, if communications along both banks of a river, or in the case of a mountain barrier, be equal in number, and in the facility which they afford for the march and crossing of troops, the defence will concentrate as quickly to oppose the passage of a river, or mountain barrier, as the offence can concentrate to force the passage, and since the defence will, in addition, also have the aid of the obstacle in question, other things being equal the chances of success will lie with the defence. Nevertheless, the military history of all countries teaches the contrary. For if there be many points by which to pass, and the means of passing at those points be available, by bridges, pontoons, fords, or boats in the case of a river, and by mountain roads in the case of mountain barriers, then the offence will by feints and by stratagem be better able to deceive the defence as to the real and actual point and means by which it intends to pass. Moreover, the offence, having the further advantage of the initiative, will obtain a start in its preliminary combinations, and, if all works smoothly, and no untoward accident arises to upset the combinations, the defence will never be able to make up for this by its own combinations to resist the passage.

In addition to their influence as obstacles, both rivers and mountains act as screens to the strategic movements of two hostile armies, and as screens they favour the offence rather than the defence. The force defending an extended line of a river or a mountain barrier cannot guard all possible points of passage. For if it should so dispose its troops, then its forces, being separated, will be everywhere weak, and will consequently risk defeat by the concentrated advance of its foes upon their real point of passage, before the defence can concentrate to oppose that passage. Beyond defending the various points of passage by advance posts only, and seeking to acquire early and accurate information of the enemy's real point of passage, the defence will at first be limited to a concentration of its troops in rear of the obstacle *at some point* whence all likely crossing places may be reached in time to anticipate the enemy, either before the actual crossing has commenced, while he is crossing, or to meet his troops as they debouch from the defile. If concentration be impossible, and the troops have to be dispersed, such dispersion being necessary either on account of difficulty of supplies, or owing to the form, nature, or length of the line to be defended, then the troops must be so disposed that they may break up from their various camps and concentrate at

the actual point of passage in sufficient time to oppose the passage.

Of these two methods, if it be an absolute certainty, so far as future events in war can be accurately anticipated, that the offence will pass at *one point only*, the former is the preferable, if possible, for any error in timing the combination, in order to oppose the enemy at the point of passage, may upset the whole scheme of defence, and such errors may easily arise owing to accidents in the despatch and receipt of the orders directing the concentration, mistakes on the part of subordinate leaders, or sudden changes in the weather which affect the rate of marching of the various divisions of the troops.

For the defence, early and accurate information as to the real point of passage of its opponent is of primary importance, and this information it must, at all costs, endeavour to obtain: by spies, through its intelligence department, and by means of patrols well pushed forward in advance of the river or mountain barrier.

To sum up generally, the course of action most likely to lead to success is as follows:—

*The Offensive.*—1. To keep the enemy ignorant as to the real point of passage.

2. To make a pretence of passing at as many points as possible in order to deceive the enemy as to the actual point at which it is intended to cross.

3. To pass with the mass of its forces at one point, in order thus to drive back the enemy before that enemy can concentrate for the defence of the point at which it is really designed to pass.

*The Defensive.*—1. To acquire early and accurate information as to the real point of passage of the enemy.

2. To defend the various points of passage by advanced posts.

3. So to dispose the mass of its forces in rear of the obstacle, that on receipt of reliable information as to the enemy's real point of passage the troops may be able to concentrate at that point in sufficient time to oppose the passage.

### The Defensive.

The strategic front of an army defending an obstacle with regard to the enemy's line of advance will be one of two forms, according as that front be more or less acute or obtuse to the line of advance; that is to say, the front will be either transverse or parallel to the line of advance. (See Plate V., Figs. 4 and 5.)

Whether the strategic front be transverse or parallel will be governed partly by the direction of the lines of communications of the defence leading towards the passage to be defended,

and partly by tactical considerations as to the most favourable position on which to offer battle.

In Fig. 6 Blue if defeated will be driven back on the defile, Red if defeated will retire on his own line. The positions of the two forces are reciprocal in case of defeat of either. But in Fig. 7 Blue if defeated will be driven away from the defile, and the line of his retreat would be cut by Red seizing the defile. On the other hand, Red if defeated would retire on his own line. In case of defeat to either force the situation is not reciprocal, but is in favour of Red.

But Red, for tactical reasons, such as the nature of the ground, may "form front to flank." (See Figs. 8 and 9.)

In Fig. 8 the positions are not reciprocal, but are in favour of Blue. In Fig. 9 the positions are reciprocal. Provided the defence, connected with its base of operations by one line of communications only, opposes the passage of an obstacle with its forces concentrated, then the direction of its front with the direction of the line of communications will assume one or other of the four forms illustrated in Figs. 6, 7, 8 and 9.

But there may be more than one line of communications and line of retreat in case of a reverse, and there probably will be when—

(a) The base of operations be *re-entrant* or concave to the obstacle defended.

(b) Or, if straight, its front be long compared with the front of operations.

If there be more than one line of communications and of retreat, then the power of manœuvring will be freer, and there will be a larger choice of suitable tactical positions. For a favourable tactical position, which might be unsuitable if only one line of retreat in case of reverse were available, may well be taken advantage of if possessing alternative lines of retreat.

Straight, angular, and circular bases, and their various influences on strategic movements, are discussed in the chapter dealing with bases (Chapter VI). To deal with them in connection with the passage of obstacles is not therefore necessary.

If the defence be beaten, a single line of communications which runs close to and parallel to the obstacle (see Figs. 7 and 8) that it has endeavoured to defend is unfavourable, for the obstacle will limit the direction of the retreat, and further the attack, if it can pass a portion of its forces over the obstacle in that direction along which the retreat lies, and before that retreat is completed and a new line of defence occupied, will gain and cut the line of retreat. The advantage of an alternative line of retreat is here obvious. A practical example, illustrating the disadvantages of a single line of communications which runs parallel to the obstacle to be defended, and of the advantages derived by the

attack from crossing the obstacle at a second point in the direction of the retreat, and so gaining the enemy's line of communications, is illustrated in the passage of the Douro by Wellington in 1809.

PASSAGE OF THE DOURO, MAY, 1809. (MAP V.)

Wellington, upon his arrival in Lisbon, having been appointed to the command of the British and Portuguese forces, resolved to operate against Soult, then in possession of Oporto.

He moved with his army to Coimbra, on the Mondego, whence he detached Beresford with 8,000 men, of whom 6,000 were Portuguese, to move by way of Viseu and Tamego, and cross the Douro at Pezo. He himself, at the head of 14,500 infantry, 1,500 cavalry, and 24 guns, crossed the Vouga and pushed the advanced French forces back and across the Douro.

The line of the Douro was held by Soult from its mouth to Pezo, with the view of covering the retreat of his army into the Tras-os-Montes.

Wellington forced the passage of the Douro at Oporto, thus compelling Soult to abandon that town. Higher up the river General Murray, at Avintas, had also succeeded in crossing, and was favourably placed for falling on the flank of the French in their retreat from the town, but for some unaccountable reason made no use of the golden opportunity thus presented to him. The French retreat was directed towards Amarante. In their march to that place, therefore, they had the Douro on their right hand and the Sierra de Catalina on their left, both reckoned as impassable. Beresford had, however, in the meantime made good his passage of the Douro at Pezo, and had directed his march thence to Amarante, which, it being deserted by Loison, the French commander, he occupied. This fact was only learnt by Soult as he was passing the Souza torrent, which flows from the Sierra de Catalina into the Douro. His position then was perilous in the extreme. His objective point, Amarante, was in possession of Beresford, behind him in pursuit was Wellington, and on either flank lay what were supposed to be impassable obstacles. "But in that terrible crisis the marshal duke justified fortune for having raised him to such a dignity," for Soult, learning from a Spanish pedlar of a path which led over the Sierra de Catalina, resolved to seize the only opportunity which offered for escape. The natural difficulties of the track were increased by tempestuous weather, but overcoming all obstacles, Soult forced his army across the Sierra and escaped, though not without heavy losses in men and material.

That Murray lost the opportunity presented to him of falling on the French flank as they fled from Oporto, and that Soult by his energy and skill again effected his retreat by an alternative track, when in front and behind him the defile was

closed by the allied forces—these are no arguments against the disadvantages and dangers of a single line of retreat parallel to an obstacle which an attempt has been made to defend, for if that obstacle be crossed by the enemy at a second point in the direction along which the retreat lies, and before it is completed, the line of retreat will be cut.

#### *General Remarks.*

Suppose the defence, possessing more than one line of communications, and aware that it is the intention of the offence to pass at one and a known point instead of concentrating, elects to divide its forces and posts them as at A, B and C (Plan V., Fig. 10), each separate fraction having its own line of retreat and each being within supporting distance of the other.

In Fig. 10 Red has crossed the obstacle, but what is his next move to be? If he should elect to move against either flank of Blue, his own flank and line of communications back to the defile will be open to a counter stroke from Blue's centre and the disengaged flank. If, on the other hand, he attacks the centre B, or towards either flank of the centre B, in the hope of penetrating Blue's front, Blue can operate against either or both of his (Red's) flanks or line of communications. Whichever course of action Red adopts, the result of the battle will then probably depend, both to Red and Blue, upon the use or misuse of "containing forces."

If Red attacks Blue's flank, say A, then A (Blue) will really be fighting a containing action, while B and C (Blue) operate against Red's flank and line of communications. On the other hand, as Red dare not leave his flank and line of communications unguarded in his movement and attack on A (Blue), he must leave troops for their defence to contain B and C (Blue).

Again, if Red operates against Blue's centre B, then B (Blue) will be fighting a containing action till his flanks arrive to support him, or whilst they operate against Red's flanks or line of communications.

The best course for Blue is obviously *not* to attack, but await attack, and Red must attack if Blue's forces cover directly or indirectly Red's ulterior objective. Whether the defence elects to fight with its forces concentrated or separated will usually depend upon whether the line of communications and line of retreat be single or double, and whether there be single or alternative lines will again depend on the form or extent of the base of operations towards the obstacle to be defended.

Apart from the capabilities and skilfulness of the two opposing generals, it is probable that the line of action for the offence will, under the conditions now indicated, be mainly decided by tactical considerations, chief amongst which will be

the nature of the ground upon and over which the coming battle must be fought.

So far, the case in which an army seeks to cross a mountain barrier or a river by one line of advance only has been considered. But a general may seek to pass an obstacle at two or more points at the same time, when these points are not within supporting distance of each other. The general principles already indicated, both for the attack and defence, in this case still hold good.

The risk in the attack lies in the fact that the separated fractions of the army which have crossed may be beaten in detail before they can concentrate. The next movement, therefore, of the general who has successfully passed an obstacle at more than one point will usually be one of concentration.

To the general who seeks to cross an obstacle at more than one point the *distance* from each other of the separated points, and the *time* necessary to complete the concentration of his divided forces which have passed, will be the chief considerations governing the selection of the points of passage at which he proposes to pass.

In the separation of the forces which have passed, and in the opportunity thus afforded to beat the separated fractions in detail, lies the advantage of the army which defends an obstacle. To hold up by means of containing forces one separated fraction of the enemy's army whilst it is actually passing, or when it has already passed, and to fall with the remainder concentrated on the other separated fraction of the enemy while it is passing, or when it has already passed, is a plan of operations obviously likely to lead to success.

In the defence of a river the roads leading to the bridge may be defended—which corresponds with the defence of the entrance to a mountain defile.

The river once crossed, resistance to a further advance will be offered by defending the roads leading from the bridge—which corresponds with the defence of the roads leading from a mountain defile.

But here the similarity in the defence of the two obstacles ceases. Troops may, or may not, come under the fire of the defence whilst in the act of crossing a river, but if they do, the nature of the defence offered is not of the same kind, and cannot be compared to the opposition which may be offered to the heads of advancing columns, while in the act of pushing and forcing their way through or over a defile or pass of a mountain barrier. In other words, resistance on the obstacle itself can be offered in the case of a mountain barrier, but not in the case of a river, unless the river be so broad and deep as to be navigable by armed vessels. In this latter event

the defence of a river on the obstacle itself will correspond more or less to the defence of a mountain barrier on the obstacle; but such a defence as here indicated is exceptional in the case of a river.

Hence a mountain barrier usually admits of a more protracted defence than a river. And the delaying and retarding influence of a mountain barrier is much increased in the assistance which may be demanded from, and will be given by, the inhabitants of the range, provided they be friendly to the defence. For mountaineers are an enduring and hardy race of people as a rule, courageous, and naturally apt and intelligent in the tactics of mountain warfare. These advantages, combined with their knowledge of the ramifications of the spurs and valleys, and their acquaintance with the lesser or, except to themselves, unknown tracks and byways of their own hills, will be of great assistance in all operations undertaken with the object of delaying the enemy in his advance.

So far the case in which the defence seeks to resist the offence on the near or defender's side of the obstacle only has been discussed.

But the defence is not necessarily tied or limited to its own side of the obstacle.

The defence may combine all defensive operations on its own side by manœuvring offensively on the assailant's side of the obstacle:

1. By crossing beyond either flank of the assailant;
2. Or, based on a flank, by advancing from that flank towards the line of operations of the assailant,

With the object in either case of

(a) Operating on the flank of the assailant during his advance to cross the obstacle.

(b) Attacking him whilst he is actually crossing the obstacle.

(c) Assailing his line of communications when he has already crossed the obstacle or is astride of the obstacle.

Plate V., Fig. 11, illustrates a simple case of the strategic manœuvres above described.

A is Red's objective. Red has succeeded in crossing the obstacle M X at C, and is at P when he finds his further advance opposed by a Blue force at O interposing directly between Red at P and Red's objective A. Moreover, he finds that part of Blue's forces, having crossed the obstacle at G, is threatening his line of communications by the line G H; or it may be he finds that Blue, operating from a base X Y, has advanced on the line E D towards his line of communications C Q with his base.

Red at P is now in a dangerous position. Three courses lie open to him :

1. To recross the obstacle at C, with the object of driving away and defeating Blue's force on the line G H or E D, at the same time leaving a detaining force at C to cover the operation.

A detaining force to cover the passage at C is necessary, for otherwise Blue from O may cross the obstacle at C, and take Red in flank whilst he is engaged with Blue on the line G H or E D, as the case may be.

2. To detach a force to contain Blue on the line G H or E D whilst he engages and attacks Blue at O.

In either event the detailing of a containing force reduces the numbers available for Red's main operation against Blue, whether at O or on the line G H or E D.

3. The heroic measure of persisting in his advance with all available forces on Blue at O in the hope of crushing Blue there and then marching on A.

But this proceeding would require a general of exceptional determination, one vigorous in execution and very confident of success, and the stroke even if successful would really depend on the importance of the objective A. If the capture of A would result in terminating the war, or the giving to Red of some great strategical advantage, then a general would be justified in adopting this plan, but if the possession of that objective be of minor importance only with regard to the strategie results to be expected from its gain, then, situated in the circumstances indicated in Fig. 11, a general will seek to escape from the counter-stroke of his antagonist by either of the two first courses.

#### The Offensive.

Once the offence has successfully passed an obstacle, the next objective will be the enemy's field army, if that army be posted to resist further advance. The offence must attack if the enemy's army be so posted as *directly* to cover the ulterior objective of the offence. And even if it be so posted as to cover that objective *indirectly*, to continue the advance without first defeating and dispersing it would be very dangerous.

But what principle of strategy will the offence adopt in its attack?

From a glance at any of the situations shown in Figs. 6 to 9, Plate V., it is clear that the attacker cannot "compel his opponent to form front to flank," or to "strike at his line of communications" without equally either forming "front to flank" himself or exposing his own line of communications. And as the line of communications of the offence would be more immediately threatened than that of the defencée, the operation would be risky, especially if the leader of the defencée were a general of ability and vigorous in execution. A short advance might at once place the defence astride the line of communications of

the offence without necessarily losing its own line, and the operation would be greatly facilitated should the defence possess the advantage of alternative or divergent lines of communications.

But the offence may attempt a movement against the flank or line of communications of the defence by detaching a part of its force to cross the obstacle at some point to either flank with the object of facilitating its own direct advance. And there are many instances of this manœuvre. But the plan is dangerous, and involves the taking and accepting of a certain amount of risk. For the separated fraction on the defender's side of the obstacle, unsupported and having to rely entirely on itself, may be overwhelmed by superior forces. Beresford's march up the right bank of the Gave de Pau, prior to the battle of Orthes, in Wellington's operations for the passage of the Adour, 1814, is a case in point. The separation of Sir Joseph Thackwell's force in the passage of the River Chenab (1848) by Sir Hugh Gough is another. Though in both instances the detached forces not only escaped destruction but actually effected the desired result, yet that is no proof that the hazards incurred by this method of manœuvring may be overlooked.

PASSAGE OF THE RIVER CHENAB BY SIR HUGH GOUGH,  
2<sup>nd</sup> SIKH CAMPAIGN, 1848-49. (MAP X.)

Sir Hugh Gough, having crossed the Rivers Sutlej and Ravi, arrived opposite Ramnugger, on the left bank of the Chenab. His force here consisted of about 12,500 infantry and 3,500 cavalry.

At Ramnugger, on both sides of the bank of the river, lay the Sikh army, commanded by Shere Singh. "The position occupied was admirably chosen. From it Shere Singh could intercept the movements of the ruler of Kashmir, could cover his communications with his father in the Dera-jat, and could draw supplies from productive districts in the upper part of the Chenab."\*

The River Chenab at Ramnugger was very wide: there was a fairly good ford, but the river bed was sandy, with a treacherous bottom, and the course of the stream constantly changed.

*November 22nd.*—A reconnaissance was pushed forward for the purpose of reconnoitring the river: the cavalry were roughly handled, but the Sikhs retired to the right (west) bank of the river.

Sir Hugh Gough desired to cross the Chenab, and to push the Sikh army back on the Jhelum. The natural difficulties presented by the river, combined with the fact that the Sikh army, strong in artillery, was in position and ready to dispute its passage, rendered a crossing at Ramnugger too risky a proceeding to attempt.

\* Malleson, "Decisive Battles of India."

The fords across the Chenab were as follows:—

One at Ramnugger.

One at Ghurriki, seven miles above Ramnugger, guarded.

One at Rumniki, above Ghurriki, guarded.

One at Ali Sher-ki-Chuk, unguarded, but a dangerous ford owing to the strength of the stream.

One at Wazirabad, twenty-two miles above Ramnugger.

Sir Joseph Thackwell, with one infantry division and a brigade of cavalry, was directed to proceed to Rumniki and there cross, thence to descend the river and so come down on the flank of the Sikh army.

Sir Hugh Gough, with the remainder of his army, was during this movement to concentrate the attention of the Sikh army by demonstrations as if to cross at Ramnugger. The ford at Rumniki was chosen, as, being further away than that of Ghurriki, it might not be so well guarded. A party was also detached to secure the ford at Wazirabad. The danger in this operation lay in the fact that Shere Singh might fall on and overwhelm Sir Joseph Thackwell's force on its march down the right bank of the river, when separated from and beyond reach of help from Sir Hugh Gough's force at Ramnugger. Still, something had to be risked, and the above plan seemed to offer the best chances of success, to ensure which secrecy and rapidity of movement were essential.

### *Movements.*

The force to cross at the fords was paraded at midnight, November 30th—December 1st. But the night was dark, the infantry became entangled in the intricacies of the camp, and Sir Joseph Thackwell's force, instead of arriving at Rumniki at 8 a.m., did not reach the ford till 11 a.m. The ford had not apparently been reconnoitred, and when Thackwell rode forward to take stock of the situation “the view that met his gaze was not encouraging.” He saw before him a broad river bed, far broader here than in front of Ramnugger, “the water flowing swiftly over which was divided into four separate channels, with sand banks, and, as the natives reported, with dangerous quick-sands. The opposite bank was out of range, and was guarded by the enemy.”\*

The superior officers spent three hours in considering what was to be done, and then came to the conclusion that to attempt the passage of the river at Rumniki and Ali Sher-ki-Chuk was impossible, and Sir Joseph Thackwell determined to march on to Wazirabad and attempt the ford at that place. Here, fortunately, Nicholson had collected seventeen boats and staked out the fords.

\* Malleson, *op. cit.*

Darkness had set in as Thackwell reached Wazirabad, but the Sikhs had posted no guards. Relying on the darkness and the neglect of the enemy, Thackwell determined to cross at once, and half the force was immediately passed over, the remaining half bivouacking on the near side of the river.

*December 2nd.*—The passage of the river completed at Wazirabad, the force marched twelve miles down the right bank to Duriwal. News of the passage was sent to Sir H. Gough, who, to hold Shere Singh, opened fire on his position with his guns.

*December 3rd.*—Thackwell continued his movement, and had made about six miles when he received orders that he was not to attack the left of the Sikhs at Ramnugger till he was joined by an extra brigade, which was to cross at the ford by Ghurriki. Whereupon he camped at Sadalapore, sending a regiment to Ghurriki to hold out a hand to the brigade which was to cross there. Shere Singh, however, had on the 3rd received information of the passage of the river at Wazirabad, and determined to march and crush Thackwell, separated and beyond reach of assistance from Gough. He would then deal with Gough. This plan Shere Singh at once put into operation, but at the last moment his resolution failed him. He left the greater part of his force still opposite Gough, and marched with 10,000 men only against Thackwell, whom he encountered just as that leader was making preparations to march. The proximity of Shere Singh was a surprise to Thackwell, but again the resolution of the former was unequal to the occasion, and instead of attacking, Shere Singh contented himself with opening fire from his guns. An artillery duel then commenced, and continued till sunset, two feeble attempts to turn both flanks of the British being repulsed. During the night Shere Singh, dreading the passage of the Chenab by that part of the British army under Sir H. Gough, retired to his original position, and breaking up there, retired inland to take up a new position with his back to the River Jhelum.

*December 4th.*—Thackwell, joined by another brigade, followed the Sikh army.

*December 5th.*—Thackwell moved to Helah.

*December 18th.*—A bridge of boats across the Chenab having been completed, Sir Hugh Gough crossed to the right bank and joined Thackwell at Helah.

#### General Remarks.

It has already been stated that the first movements after passing an obstacle at more than one point are usually those which are directed with a view to a concentration of the separated parts, and as already explained, concentration after

passing a mountain défile will usually be more difficult, and will require more time, than after crossing a river. Consequently greater facilities for keeping the separated parts asunder and of defeating them in detail are presented to the defensee. If this be so, then it may be said that the passage of a mountain barrier at more than one point involves greater risks than the crossing of a river at more than one point. Nevertheless, in spite of this fact, instances in which armies cross an obstacle at more than one point are more numerous in the case of mountain barriers than in the case of rivers. And the reason for this is not far to seek. It is because the time taken to traverse a mountain defile by a mass of troops in one column with their necessary impedimenta is so great. If the offensee be limited to one line of advance across a mountain barrier the passage of the defile requires an undue period of time; and troops can only trickle through the defile, thus affording the defensee a favourable opportunity of crushing them in detail as they debouch into open country. Therefore, in order to diminish the time taken to pass a mountain barrier, a leader will more often seize an opportunity of passing an obstacle of this nature at more than one point, accepting the risks involved, than he will in the case of a river.

It was stated on page 135 that the defensee of an obstacle on the defender's side may be advantageously combined with manœuvring offensively on the assailant's side of the obstacle "by crossing beyond either flank of the assailant" (see line K G H, Fig. 11, Plate V.).

The reader at the moment may have paused to ask himself why, if the assailant be advancing on "double lines" towards two points of passage of an obstacle, the defender should not cross to the assailant's side *between* the two points of passage with the object of applying that principle of strategy defined as "penetrating the divided parts of an enemy's strategic front." The reply is that, granted there be means of crossing the obstacle between the two points of passage, the operation would be dangerous in case of a reverse, unless exceptional facilities for recrossing to the defender's side of the obstacle be available. If such facilities do not exist, the obstacle will limit the freedom of movement of the forces which have crossed to the assailant's side of the obstacle, and these forces may themselves be cut off from regaining their own side of the obstacle.

A more prudent course is the passive defensee of the defender's side of the obstacle, the counter-stroke being directed against the assailant's flank or his line of communications, and this can only be effected by passing the obstacle beyond the outer flank of the assailant's columns.

If this argument be admitted, then from the offensive point

of view it will be granted that the danger of operating by more than one line is much diminished if the direction of the lines be towards a transverse obstacle, for the obstacle itself will afford a measure of protection to the strategic front. And the obstacle will in any case complicate any combinations which the opponent may attempt for penetrating and intervening between the separated heads of the advancing columns. For the defensive, the danger of passing to the assailant's side of the obstacle beyond his flanks, with the intention of operating against his flank or his line of communications, will be modified or will be avoided altogether, if the defender possess the advantage of a re-entrant base, from one of the sides of which he may launch the counter-stroke.

All the various situations which may arise are not covered by what is stated. The reader will do well to work out for himself imaginary situations and problems, a few only of which are here outlined.

And here it is proper to point out that a knowledge of the elements of strategic movements is especially necessary to all officers, however junior in rank. A general will depend to a great extent, though not entirely, for information as to his opponent's movements, on his intelligence department, private and political spies, and other outside sources of information, such as foreign newspapers, etc.; but he will always seek to confirm such information by means of his own patrols. The leaders of these patrols may be specially selected staff officers, or may be the most junior regimental officer. Referring to Plate V., Fig. 11, it is to be noted that the leader of a patrol may discover that the enemy is crossing or has crossed between M and C, or is advancing on the line R D; if he be unaware of the full significance of such a movement, he may merely confine himself to a vague report that parties of the enemy are moving in such and such a direction, and then consider his duty completed. But if he be alive to the importance of the move, he will report strength and composition of the troops, he will be at great pains and spare himself no fatigue to verify his information, and he will take particular and extra precautions that his information reaches headquarters. His information in the one case will be more complete and accurate than in the other, and may therefore be the means of enabling his general to arrive at a correct estimate of his antagonist's real design.

PASSAGE OF THE ADOUR AND THE GAVES, FEBRUARY  
AND MARCH, 1814. (MAP IV.)

Wellington, having successfully effected the passages of the Bidassoa, the Nivelle, and the Nive rivers, designed to

force Soult over the River Garonne, and if possible upon Bordeaux.

Upon Bordeaux because—

1. The citizens of Bordeaux were inimical to Napoleon.
2. The town, lying upon the left bank of the River Garonne, would be difficult to defend.
3. By forcing Soult towards Bordeaux, a junction of that officer's army with the French force in Catalonia commanded by Suchet would be difficult.

To operate by his own right, by turning the rivers at their sources, and towards the French left, was the best plan to prevent Suchet's junction with Soult, and this movement would also turn the fortified positions on the Gaves. But to carry out this plan successfully necessitated the investment of Bayonne, as otherwise it would be possible for the garrison of that place to cut Wellington's line of communications with Spain and the coast. Effectually to invest Bayonne it would be necessary to throw a part of the investing forces across to the right bank of the Adour, and to do this the Adour had to be bridged.

The British general then had two operations in hand.

1. To bridge the Adour and invest Bayonne.
2. To cross the Gaves.

And the second operation had to be carried out with due regard to the first. For as Bayonne is situated at the confluence of the Nive and the Adour, the investing force, however strong, would be separated into three parts by the two rivers and thereby weakened. The turning movement by the allied army on this account could not be made on wide or independent lines, but had to be conducted on lines so contracted that reinforcements might be despatched to aid the investing force, in the event of a sally by the garrison, or an outer attack.

The problem then arose, how and where to bridge the Adour in order to place the troops destined to invest Bayonne on the north or right bank of the river.

To throw a bridge across the Adour below Bayonne was, from an engineering point of view, far more difficult than the construction of one over that river above Bayonne. For "the rapidity and breadth of the river below Bayonne denied the use of common pontoons, and the mouth six miles from the town was so barred with sands, so beaten with surges, so difficult of navigation even with landmarks, some of which the French had removed, that it seemed impossible for vessels fit for a bridge to enter from the sea; and a strong defensive force would inevitably bar the construction, if they could."\* "On the other hand, to throw the bridge below Bayonne would give Wellington the lower Adour as a harbour, his land convoys could use the royal

\* Napier, "History of the War in the Peninsula."

causeway which led close to the river and was not affected by rain; his line of retreat also would be more secure if unforeseen misfortune should force him to relinquish the investment."\*

Though the actual construction of a bridge above Bayonne would be comparatively a less difficult operation, yet the following reasons militated against the adoption of such a course.

To assemble the necessary material, and transport it over the Nive to a point on the Adour above Bayonne, would have attracted Soult's attention, who could then have concentrated his forces to oppose the passage. And Soult, as a matter of fact, under the impression that a passage across the river below Bayonne was impossible, had placed his field army in a position extending from the Adour to St. Jean-de-Port.

Even if a bridge above the Adour could have been successfully constructed, the line of communications of the force investing Bayonne on the northern side, passing as it must not only the Adour, but also the Nive, would have been unnecessarily long and circuitous, and would have entailed a large force for its protection in the event of any sallies by the garrison.

Finally, in the event of the siege having to be abandoned, the line of retreat from the north side of the town would be a flank march in the presence of the garrison, and would thus be very insecure.

#### *British Forces.*

The field army, roughly divided into two columns, the left under Beresford, the right under Sir Rowland Hill, amounted approximately to 40,000 men (with 48 guns), including four brigades of cavalry, but exclusive of the Spanish forces under Morillo.

To this force must also be added a division of Spaniards under Mina, who at the commencement of the operations were detailed for the investment of St. Jean-de-Port; and soon after the opening moves a further reinforcement consisting of the Sixth and Light British divisions also participated in the operations.

The force under Sir John Hope detailed for the investment of Bayonne, hereafter described as the British left, consisted of 28,000 men and 48 guns, including British First and Fifth divisions.

#### *French Position and Forces.*

Garrison of Bayonne 14,000 men, who also watched the Adour from Bayonne to the mouth of the river.

Approximate strength of French field army, 30,000 infantry, 3,000 cavalry, exclusive of 8,000 conscripts under Soult, and 40 guns. It was roughly divided as follows:—

\* Napier, *op. cit.*

The right under d'Erlon, on the right bank of the Adour, extending from Bayonne to the junction with the River Bidouze.

The centre and left extending from the confluence of the Bidouze and the Adour, along the line of the Bidouze, and thence to St. Jean-de-Port.

### *Movements.*

*February 12th and 13th.*—Hill, in command of 20,000 men with sixteen guns, broke up from his positions on the Adour and at Mousserolles, and took post about Ureurray and Hasparren. This movement placed Hill on the right of the allied army. On the 12th, Soult rightly judged that part of Wellington's plan was to turn his left by crossing the Gaves, but the British leader's design to pass the Adour below Bayonne was unknown to him; he was also incorrectly informed of the numbers and situation of the allied forces.

*February 14th.*—Hill in two columns: one by Bouloc, to drive the French posts beyond the River Joyeuse, the other by the great road of St. Jean-de-Port, to dislodge Harispe, who, with three brigades, was at Hellette. Harispe, too weak to offer opposition against so great a superiority of force, fell back in the direction of St. Palais, whereupon St. Jean-de-Port was invested by the Spaniards, under Mina.

Soult had already, on the 12th, gained information of Wellington's move against his left, but, misled by hearing that the Allies had collected boats, "he thought Wellington designed to turn his left with Hill's corps, to press him on the Bidouze with Beresford's, and keep the garrison of Bayonne in check with the Spaniards, whilst Hope crossed the River Adour above that fortress" and he made his dispositions accordingly.

*February 15th.*—The allied centre, under Beresford, crossing the River Joyeuse, occupied Bastide de Clerence. The line then extended from Urt, by Briseons, the Bastide and Isturitz, towards Garris. This front, which extended to twenty miles, being too attenuated, the British Fourth Division occupied La Costa in support of the troops at the Bastide.

The allied right, under Hill, marched through Mcharin upon Garris.

*French Position.*—Left: Harispe at Garris, covering the road from St. Jean-de-Port with his left, and the line of the Upper Bidouze with his right.

Right, under d'Erlon, on the right bank of the Adour.

Centre: Villatte at Itharre, and Taupin at Bergonez. Foy guarded the river from Came to its confluence with the River Adour.

Combat of Garris.

French left retreated to St. Palais.

*February 16th.—British Position.*—Right: Hill crossed the River Bidouze.

Centre: Fourth Division and part of the Seventh Division from La Costa to Bastide de Clerence.

Light Division to La Costa.

*French Position.*—Left: Harispe in position behind the River Soissons, with left pushed towards the Gave de Maulcon.

Centre: Villatte to Sauveterre.

Taupin from Sauveterre to Sordes, on the right bank of the Gave d'Oleron.

Right: D'Erlon passed from the right to the left bank of the Adour.

*February 17th.—British Position.*—Right, through Domenzain. The Third Division through Masparraute, to the heights of Somberraute. Both corps converged upon Arriveriche, occupied by the French to defend the River Soissons above its confluence with the Gave d'Oleron.

Jaca, which commanded the pass by which Soult maintained communication with Aragon, left to its own resources by the retreat of the French, capitulated.

*February 18th.—British Position.*—The right seized the main road running from Sauveterre to Navarrens, on the left bank of the Gave d'Oleron, and spreading themselves between the River Soissons and the Gave d'Oleron occupied all the villages along the road to Navarrens, and cannonaded the bridge head of Sauveterre.

Centre: Fourth Division to Bidache on the Bidouze; Light Division to Bastide de Clerence.

Seventh Division extended from Bastide de Clerence to the Adour.

Third Division at Somberraute.

Cavalry of the centre connected the Fourth with the Third Division along the banks of the Bidouze.

Morillo's Spaniards along the River Soissons guarded the fords as far as Nabas.

*French Position.*—Left: relinquished the line of the River Soissons, and retired to Sauveterre.

Centre: Villatte to Sauveterre.

Taupin to Bastide de Béarn.

Foy prolonged Taupin's line to the right.

Right: D'Erlon on the left bank of the Adour, above its confluence with the Gave de Pau.

Soult was now much mystified. The movement of part of the British left centre towards the Adour led him to believe that his works at Hastingues and Peyrehorade were the British general's objective; at the same time the advance of the British right seemed to indicate a march on Pau, or a march for the

purpose of detaining him on the Gaves whilst the camp at Bayonne was assaulted. This latter conjecture was nearest the truth, though the intention was *not* to assault Bayonne, but to throw a bridge over the Adour below that place. Soult decided to hold the Gaves as long as he could, and when forced to abandon the defensive to concentrate on Orthes, and there to fall suddenly upon the first of the Allies' converging columns that approached him.

*February 19th, 20th, and 21st.*—Wellington, having established his line beyond the Soissons and Bidouze rivers, proceeded in person to St. Jean de Luxe. All preparations for the passage of the Adour were complete, but the weather being unfavourable for immediate operations the British general returned, on the 21st, to Garris.

The Sixth Division, in front of Mousseroles, and the Light Division, on the march, were to come into line with the British centre on the River Bidouze.

The Fifth Division relieved the Sixth Division at Mousseroles.

The pontoons necessary for crossing the Upper Gaves reached Garris on the 21st.

*February 23rd.—British Position.*—Left: On the night of the 22nd-23rd the First Division moved from Anglet towards the Adour, the banks of which were reached at daybreak, the enemy's attention being attracted by false attacks, which were prolonged beyond the Nive by the Fifth Division at Mousseroles.

The intended co-operation of the fleet at the mouth of the Adour being delayed by contrary winds, Hope determined to effect the passage with the army alone.

The French flotilla in the river, being roughly handled by Hope's artillery and rockets from the left or southern bank, retreated up the river towards Bayonne. Hope, by means of a pontoon, and a raft constructed of pontoons, succeeded in obtaining a footing on the north bank of the river. The French, completely surprised and taken unawares, made scarcely any defence, and the passage of troops continued all day and during the night of the 23rd-24th.

Centre and Right: Beresford, to distract the enemy's attention, had collected boats, and also had sent one battalion across the Adour to the right bank near Urt. This battalion, however, was recalled in the evening. Beresford, moving forward, "drove Foy's posts from the works at Oyergave and Hastingues, on the lower parts of the Oleron Gave, into the entrenchments at Peyrehorade."

The Sixth and Light Divisions had come into line on the River Soissons. Six divisions and two brigades of cavalry were concentrated on Gave d'Oleron, between Sauveterre and Navarrens.

The pontoons were carried forward beyond the Gave de Mauleon.

*French Position.*—The right and centre were held in check by Beresford's movements above detailed.

The left were distributed at Orthes and Sauveterre, but were feeling on the left towards Navarren.

*February 24th.—British Position.*—Left: The passage of the river by the army continued till midday. The fleet appeared at the mouth of the Adour, and successfully overcoming the many and great difficulties presented by crossing the bar and navigating the river, combined with the army in the construction of a "stupendous bridge" three miles below Bayonne. By evening the First Division and Bradford's Portuguese (8,000 men in all) had crossed to the right bank and taken post for the night.

Centre: Seventh Division kept Foy in check at Peyrehorade.

Fourth Division towards Sordes and Leren.

Cavalry threatened the fords between Bastide de Bearn and Sauveterre.

Third Division to Sauveterre threatened the bridge head.

Sixth Division towards the ford of Monfort, which was passed without opposition.

Right: The Light Division crossed the Soissons at Nabas. Le Cor's Portuguese, the Second Division, three batteries artillery, and four regiments cavalry, made a concentric movement for the purpose of crossing the Gave d'Oleron at the ford of Villenave, three miles below Doguen.

Morillo's Spaniards to Lauzette, a small river running in front of Navarren, in order to distract the attention of the garrison from Wellington's intended point of passage at the ford of Villenave.

*French Position.*—Being menaced along a front of twenty-five miles, the French forces retreated generally on Orthes.

Right: Under d'Erlon, reached Orthes.

Centre: Part to Orthes, part remained in position covering the town.

Left: Part to Orthes, part retreated towards Pau, part at Navarren.

*February 25th.—British Position.*—Left: The investment of Bayonne on the right bank of the Adour was completed. The allied forces on that bank faced south, the left wing on the Adour above Bayonne, the right resting on the river below the town.

The construction of the bridge was continued.

Centre and right: The Fourth and Seventh Divisions were posted in front of Peyrehorade, Third Division and a brigade of cavalry in front of the broken bridge of Berenz five miles below Orthes on the Gave de Pau.

The Light Division, Sixth and Second, Hamilton's Portuguese, five regiments of cavalry, and three batteries of artillery, were massed in front of Orthes.

Morillo's Spaniards were directed to invest Navarrens.

*French Position.*—Right: Foy at Peyrehorade retired to Orthes by the Bayonne road.

Centre and left: Clausel's rearguard pushed from Magret into the suburbs of Orthes, which covered the bridge of that place on the left bank.

*February 26th.—British Position.*—Left: The construction of the bridge being completed, Hope determined to contract the line of investment of the citadel. The wings succeeded in resting their flanks on the Adour above and below the town at about 900 yards from the enemy's works, and after a severe action in the centre, that part of the line of investment established itself close to the enemy's works on the entrenched bridge of St. Etienne.

Wellington established direct communication with his left *via* the Port de Lande, calling to himself by that route two Spanish Divisions and a Brigade of Portuguese infantry under Freyr.

Centre and left: Beresford crossed the Gave, and sending a detachment to Habas on the left for the purpose of cutting the French line of communications with Dax, marched with the remainder of his force up the right bank of the Gave de Pau to Baights, whence he covered the construction of a bridge at Berenz, by which the Third Division crossed the river.

*French Position.*—Soult, having concentrated his forces in Orthes under Reille, d'Erlon, and Clausel, prepared to give battle at Orthes. Learning, at three in the afternoon, of Beresford's march up the right bank of the Gave d'Oleron, he hesitated whether to fall upon Beresford or Pieton whilst the latter was passing the river, or to take up a defensive position. Deciding upon the latter course, he drew up his line of battle, opposing Beresford and Pieton by Reille and d'Erlon, while Clausel, in Orthes, looked to Hill, who menaced the bridge with 12,000 men.

*February 27th.—Battle of Orthes.* Sixth and Light Divisions crossed the bridge of Berenz, joining Beresford and Pieton. Hill, unable to force the bridge at Orthes, forded the Gave at Souars, cut the French from the road to Pau, and turned the town of Orthes.

The fight was stubbornly contested on both sides; but Soult, menaced by Hill's turning movement, which would cut his line of retreat by Sal Spiee on the road to St. Sever, was compelled to retreat.

The retirement was carried out by Soult in a masterly way.

Between the Gave d'Oléron and the Adour River, and, roughly, parallel to the courses of those rivers, run four streams, the Luy de Béarn, the Luy de France, the Louts, and the Gabas. Upon the possession of the wooden bridge of Sault de Navailles on the Luy de Béarn, which ran five miles in the rear of Soult's position at Orthes, depended the success or otherwise of the retreat, as once across the bridge which spanned the Luy de Béarn, that and the three other streams would cover the retreat. "But to carry off by one road and one bridge a defeated army still closely engaged in front seemed impossible. Nevertheless, Soult did so." Hill saw the importance of the possession of the bridge, and he and part of the French forces raced towards it. The French, however, though severely handled, were first, and Soult destroyed the bridge. Here the pursuit ended for the day.

It was not till the morning of the 27th that Wellington discovered Soult's intention to fight a decisive action at Orthes, his dispositions having been made with the object of passing the Gave d'Oléron in the quickest and surest manner, of establishing direct communication with Hope, of investing Bayonne, of uniting with Beresford, while continuing to operate with Hill's corps by his right.

Soult missed an opportunity in not falling on Beresford's separated column whilst the Third Division was passing by the bridge of Berenz.

*February 28th.*—At daylight the pursuit was continued by Wellington in three columns, the right by St. Madard to Samadet, the centre by the main road to St. Sever, the left by St. Cirq.

The French, however, succeeded in gaining the right bank of the Adour by the bridge of St. Sever, which they there destroyed.

Darican at Dax destroyed all stores not removed to Mont Marsin, and retreated through the Landes to Langon on the Garonne.

Soult, abandoning St. Sever, left d'Erlon at Caceres and marched himself to Barcelonne, higher up the Adour, sending Clausel to occupy Aire on the left bank of the Adour. By this move he abandoned his magazines at Mont Marsin and left open the direct road to Bordeaux. Wellington, repairing the bridge at St. Sever, crossed by its means and by a ford below the bridge.

*March 1st.—Hill to Aire.*

Combat of Aire, in which part of the French were driven over the River Lées.

Soult retreated by both banks of the Adour up the river.

"On February 14th the passage of the Gaves was commenced by Hill's attack on Harispe at Hellete. On March 2nd the first series of operations was terminated by the combat at Aire. In

these sixteen days Wellington traversed with his right wing 80 miles, passed five large and several small rivers, forced the enemy to abandon two fortified bridge heads and many minor works, gained one great battle and two combats, captured six guns and a thousand prisoners, seized the magazines at Dax, Mont Marsin, and Aire, forced Soult to abandon Bayonne, and also cut him off from Bordeaux. And in this time he threw his stupendous bridge below Bayonne, and closely invested that fortress after a sharp and bloody action." \*

### The Strategy of Mountain Warfare.

So far mountains have been considered only in their aspect as strategic obstacles or barriers. The case when the whole theatre of operations is a mountain district is a distinct operation of war, regarding which a few remarks may here be appropriately included.

The difficulties of mountain warfare compared with operations over a flat or undulating country are mainly those connected with supply and transport—that is, in keeping the troops properly fed, clothed, and equipped; and it is on account of these difficulties, added to the nature of the *terrain*, that mountain warfare is always arduous and very harassing to the troops employed. It is a national warfare on the part of the mountaineers, who are usually united in defence, though their general plans and combinations may be thwarted by intertribal jealousy. Nevertheless, filled as they are with an extraordinary love of their country, and determined to maintain their independence and liberty, opposition of the most strenuous character must always be reckoned upon. Every step will be disputed. The invading army will find itself at home only within the actual precincts of its camp, and even there peace and rest are seldom to be found, for the camp will be attacked, should any favourable opportunity for so doing present itself. It will be fired into by day and by night, unless defended by picquets thrown out on the heights which overlook and command the camp or bivouac. Supplies from the surrounding country are to be obtained only at the point of the sword; convoys will be threatened and attacked; the lines of communications will be raided.

It is a common supposition that the strategy of mountain warfare is more than ordinarily intricate and complicated. As a matter of fact, the exact contrary is the case. For, roads and lines of operations in a mountain district being limited, all strategic movements are necessarily also limited. Large bodies of men committed to a certain line must abide by that line, and once committed to a certain line, the objective point and the

\* Napier, *op. cit.*

reasons for adopting the line can be more or less accurately gauged by the enemy. The higher the mountain system, the fewer the roads and passes by and along which troops can operate; the greater the impracticability of the main mountain ranges and their offshoots, the greater the loss of freedom of manœuvre, and consequently the more confined the strategy. The choice of the strategic plan to be adopted will be limited to two or three at most, and the conditions may be such that there will be only one plan which it will be possible to put in execution.

The great secret of mountain warfare consists in not hurrying but in going slow, to make certain of, and to secure, each step taken before another in advance is made. Above all, as progress continues, to open out the country in rear by means of good roads, and take proper precautions adequately to provide for the safety of these roads, so that difficulties of communication may be, so far as possible, reduced to a minimum.

Monk, in his Highland campaign, 1654, may be quoted as the first British general who fully understood the strategy and the tactics of mountain warfare.

"Still more remarkable is his recognition of the fact that in such a campaign success depends mainly on the efficiency of advanced parties and outposts. He never moved without a cloud of scouts in front and flanks: he made it a rule never to march after midday: and when he halted he marked out the camp, and posted every piquet and every sentry himself. He showed himself to be the first English exponent of the principle of savage warfare. He invaded the enemy's country, carrying his supplies with him, and sat down. If he was attacked, he was ready in a strong position: if not, he made good the step that he had taken, left a magazine in a strong post behind him, and marched on, systematically ravaging the country and destroying the newly sown crops. The enemy was obliged to move or starve, and wherever they went he swiftly followed. If they turned and fought he asked for nothing better than the chance of dispersing them at a blow; if they dodged, he brought forward another column from another base to cut them off, while he destroyed the fastnesses which they had deserted. Finally, when his work was done he settled down quietly to govern the country in a conciliatory spirit."\*

#### THE TIRAH CAMPAIGN.

The strategy of the Tirah expedition has been found fault with by some critics, and it has been pointed out that in place of operating with two divisions concentrated on one

\* Hon. J. W. Fortescue, "History of the British Army."

line, the employment of independent brigades operating each on its own line would have been a more favourable course to have pursued. Those who pass this criticism have overlooked, or have not paid sufficient attention to, the following facts:—

1. That the combined Afridi and Orakzai clans could put a very formidable force as to numbers in the field.
2. That the clans were well armed, many possessing breech-loading firearms.
3. That the mountaineers were a courageous and warlike race, never hesitating to close upon their enemy should a favourable opportunity for attack present itself.

There were several routes leading into Tirah, on each of which independent British brigades might have been placed. But by so operating, the Afridis, on inner lines, could, at will, have rapidly concentrated on any independent British brigade, and the British brigades being on wide exterior lines, mutual support would have been impossible. The defeat, or even partial reverse, of any one separated detachment might have plunged the whole in disaster. To provide against minor errors of tactics is, in mountain warfare, impossible, for the slightest mistake or error in judgment on the part of a junior officer may seriously involve a whole brigade, and however cautious, experienced, and tried in mountain warfare a general may be, accidents impossible to foresee, and so to provide for, may at any moment occur. The force was therefore concentrated and advanced by one road, that which, leading from the Hangu Valley, led over the Chagru Kotal, Sampaghla and Arhanga Passes respectively. This route possessed the advantage of being the shortest, as well as the easiest, and led direct into the heart of Tirah. The advance, though slow, was yet sure. The force being concentrated, mistakes on the part of subordinate leaders and minor errors in tactics would not necessarily involve it in ruin. When the aptness for mountain warfare on the part of the enemy is considered and the formidable nature of the passes to be crossed taken into account, that the total losses of the whole campaign in battle, from sickness, and from the hardships of such an expedition, were so few is convincing evidence of the skill with which the operations, taken as a whole, were conducted, and sufficient proof that General Lockhart's line of advance and method of attack were entirely in accord with the principles of mountain warfare.

In India, British generals and the armies they lead especially excel in all that relates to the strategy as well as the tactics of mountain warfare. This is but natural, for no other armies have so great an experience of continual warfare in mountains as those of Britain.

### Examples of the Strategic Uses of Rivers as Lines of Operations and as Lines of Communications generally.

Rivers, when they are navigable and when their general direction is coincident with, or runs parallel to, the main line of advance of an army towards the objective, are especially useful both as lines of operations and as lines of communications.

Many and various are the river campaigns which British armies have undertaken.

The advantages of the Nile in our campaigns in Egypt and the Soudan, the value of the River Irrawaddy in the advance into Upper Burmah, and of the River Chindwin in the operations in the Chin Hills, are familiar instances which will occur to the mind of every reader. But the assistance Wellington derived from the Douro, the Mondego, and the Tagus in the campaigns of the Peninsula, the use and misuse of the Chesapeake and the Hudson in the operations in North America, as well as numerous other campaigns in which rivers have played a most important part, are not so well known, and should be studied.

#### THE RIVER COLUMN IN THE ADVANCE TOWARDS KHARTOUM FOR THE RELIEF OF GENERAL GORDON.

In December, 1884, the headquarters and part of the force destined for the relief of General Gordon, then besieged by the Mahdi in Khartoum, had arrived at Korti, on the Nile.

The original plan of operations conceived by Lord Wolseley, in command of the British expedition, had been to move his whole forces by river to Berber, and thence to Khartoum. This plan, however, were Gordon to be relieved within the period it was expected he could hold out for, had to be abandoned.

It was then determined to despatch the greater portion of the mounted troops from Korti to advance across the desert to Metemmeh. On arrival at Metemmeh, the future movements of this force were to be dependent upon news of Gordon, communication with that officer being obtained by means of Gordon's own steamers.

But simultaneously with the advance of the mounted troops across the desert, a second force was to be sent by river under command of General Earle, for the double purpose of punishing the murderers of Colonel Stewart and of the Consuls, and to act as a support to the desert column in its further advance upon the Mahdi before Khartoum.

Thus the strategic conception included the despatch from a common base, Korti, of two separate forces towards the ulterior objective, the relief of Khartoum. Neither force once launched from the base would be within striking distance or support of the other. One fraction of the relieving force would be committed to a desert march, the other fraction to an advance

by river. The risks to both forces were well known, but had to be incurred. For the whole of the troops at disposal could not be marched across the desert on account of the absence of sufficient transport and of supplies, neither could the troops be sent by river, owing to insufficiency of boats to transport men and supplies, and further owing to the slow rate of progress which it would be possible to make by river. And time was the principal factor upon which the success or failure of the expedition depended. The date by which the desert column might be expected to strike the Nile could be more or less accurately estimated, but the date by which the river column would reach Berber and Metemmeh it was impossible to even approximately gauge. For between Korti and Metemmeh were numerous rapids, the exact number of which was unknown, and the difficulties which these obstacles to the navigation of the river might present it was impossible to estimate. Neither could the amount of opposition which the enemy might make to the advance of the river column be anticipated.

*December 28th, 1884.*—The advanced guard left Korti.

*January 3rd, 1885.*—The leading boats reached Hamdab.

*January 3rd.—23rd.*—Occupied in a concentration of the force at Hamdab.

*January 24th.*—Left Hamdab.

*January 27th.*—Touch with enemy gained near Kab-el-abd eataraet.

*February 1st.*—Birti, Halt. On the 5th, news of the fall of Khartoum and death of Gordon was received.

General Earle was directed to continue the advance on Berber.

*February 10th.*—The fight at Keibekan, in which the forces of the Mahdi were defeated. The leader of the river column being unfortunately killed in the battle, he was succeeded by General Brackenbury.

*February 11th—18th.*—The advance continued.

*February 19th — 21st.*—Hcbbeh, the scene of Colonel Stewart's and of the Consuls' murder, was reached.

*February 23rd.*—Huella, within twenty-six miles of Abu Hamed, reached.

*February 24th.*—Orders, countermanding the further advance of the river column towards Abu Hamed and Berber, were received by General Brackenbury.

*February 26th.*—Return journey to Korti commenced.

*March 8th.*—Arrival at Korti.

The success in overcoming the many and various difficulties presented in the navigation of the Nile is not one of the least of many remarkable feats performed by British armies. A force of nearly 3,000 men, carrying with them all necessary warlike

stores, and nearly all supplies of food and forage required for daily consumption, had been transported a vast distance in 215 boats, propelled by oars from Korti to H�iella.

The following is an extract from a military journal prior to the starting of the *expédition* :—

"The opinions which were expressed in this journal as soon as the orders were made known for the construction of those ridiculous row boats for the expedition on the Nile have been corroborated by the assent and concurrence of every man who has any experience of the country and the river. A more wicked waste of money was never perpetrated, a more silly quackery was never devised by any public department, than that of which Lord Hartington and the Duke of Cambridge, representing the War Office and the Horse Guards, have really and truly been guilty in ordering that monstrous armada of boats, that unfloatable flotilla for the Nile! Burn them for firewood! Send them to Jericho to ply on the Palestine canal of the future! Make matches of them—do anything with them! Put men in them, and try to send them up the Nile cataracts—never, we beg of you!"

With regard to which statement General Brackenbury remarks :—

"Well, there they lay, 215 boats of the unfloatable flotilla, floating above all the worst cataracts of the Nile within ten miles of the last of that series of rapids, of which it was said in every map published before the expedition started, between Gerendid and Mograt cataracts (140 miles), the river is unnavigable at low Nile. Said, and truly said, hitherto. It had been left for British soldiers and British ridiculous row boats to navigate the unnavigable, and to convey an army of 3,000 men, with their stores and munitions of war, to within twenty-six miles of Abu Hamed."\*

The operations by desert and by river, in so far as the relief of General Gordon was concerned, were a failure. This failure was due to the delay in the starting of the expedition, which again was due to the vacillation of the British Cabinet in coming to a determination as to whether an *expédition* should or should not be despatched. Consequently the failure must be ascribed, not to military, but to political causes. The value of time as a strategical factor of great importance is especially marked in this particular instance.

\* Major-General Sir Henry Brackenbury, C.B., "The River Column."

## CHAPTER IX.

### FORTIFICATIONS AS OBSTACLES.

**Fortifications Subordinate to Strategy and not Strategy to Fortifications—Many British Campaigns Exceptions to this Principle—Passive and Active Influences of Fortifications—Wellington's Retreat on the Lines of Torres Vedras (1810).**

#### **Fortifications Subordinate to Strategy and not Strategy to Fortifications.**

A STUDY of the strategy connected with the attack and defence of artificial obstacles, and of the strategical uses and misuses to which such obstacles have been put, should have a peculiar fascination for the student of military history. The campaigns of no nation have been so fruitful of the lessons to be learnt from a study of strategical manœuvres connected with artificial obstacles of every description as those of the British Empire. The British officer may, no doubt, extend his knowledge by a study of the strategy of the attack and defence of artificial obstacles conducted by foreign nations, but in the military history of his own people he will find ample material to engage his close attention.

To take one instance only. Of all the most famous artificial obstacles in the world, the lines of Torres Vedras constructed by Wellington are particularly celebrated, for they completely and successfully fulfilled the object for which they were designedly and intentionally erected. Every British officer has heard of the lines of Torres Vedras, but how many can describe in outline the object for which they were constructed, the strategy which led to their occupation, or the purpose which they fulfilled?

To describe fully the attack and defence of artificial obstacles in which British armies have been engaged would be to write volumes. The mention hereafter of a few of the most important with regard to their ultimate consequences on the whole strategy of a campaign must suffice.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries fortifications were considered of primary importance, and strategy generally

was subordinated to fortification. This was particularly the case in the wars of Marlborough, for the whole strategy of more than one campaign at that period consisted in the attack and defence of fortified towns or of continuous lines, the flanks of which were secured by natural obstacles. Then the pendulum swung to the other extreme, and fortifications were considered useless. The true use of fortifications is now recognised as a mean between the two extremes. It is perceived that really decisive results can only be obtained by active armies in the field, and that the value of fortifications lies in the assistance and support which they afford to the operations of such armies. In other words, fortifications are subservient to strategy, and not strategy to fortifications. "An army is not intended to protect a fortress, neither is a fortress created to protect an army. An army is before everything an active force whose handling is rendered very difficult when it relies on the passive protection of a fortress, but whose value increases if its commander knows how to use the passive strength of the fortress to benefit the active *rôle* of the army."

A violation of the principle that fortifications are subordinate to strategy, and not strategy to fortifications, has often had disastrous effects on the whole strategy of a campaign. Many are the instances in military history furnished by commanders who, forgetting that fortified places of certain descriptions, situated at certain points in an area of operations, should be used only as aids or pivots of manoeuvre to the active armies in the field, have regarded the defence of such places as of primary instead of secondary importance, and owing to this error have permitted themselves at the head of considerable forces to be shut up and encompassed within the limits of a fortified place. The end in such cases has generally been the same: surrender of the position together with its garrison and the active army. Fortresses which command strategie barriers either in the form of entrenched camps or quadrilaterals which command a whole region are not refuges, nor is their object to defy investment except by means of their normal garrisons.

#### Many British Campaigns Exceptions to the above Principle.

Many of Britain's campaigns are exceptions to the principle that fortifications are subordinate to strategy, in that they were campaigns undertaken for the sole object of relieving beleaguered garrisons. In campaigns of this nature the success of the operations depends upon the besieged holding out till succoured by the relieving forces, and, the relief accomplished, active operations virtually cease. In these cases the whole strategy is one

\* Lieut.-Colonel Tovey, R.E., "The Elements of Strategy."

intimately connected with the approach to, and the attack and defence of, fortifications.

Amongst such campaigns may be mentioned—

Defence and relief of Jellalabad, 1842.

Storm and capture of Magdala, Abyssinian campaign, 1867.

Defence and relief of Kandahar, 1880.

The Nile expedition for the relief of General Gordon, 1884–85.

Defence and relief of Chitral, 1895.

Defence and relief of the embassies at Pekin, 1900, by the allied armies of Europe and Japan.

Defence and relief of Kumasi, 1900.

In all campaigns of this nature the deciding factor is *time*. Can the besieged hold out till succour arrives? Will the relieving forces be in time? This is the question which will be ever present in the minds respectively of those conducting the relief and of the besieged. Every consideration must be subordinated to that of time, and it is this dominant factor which in many cases leads to that essentially British principle of strategic manœuvre, namely, "the direct advance on the objective." In the examples above quoted, with the exception of that for the relief of General Gordon, British armies, overcoming almost insuperable difficulties connected with transport, communications and climate, and advancing against overwhelming forces, have fortunately always been "in time."

Other campaigns, in which the capture of a fortress was the main objective, are—

Quebec, 1759, a success.

Seringapatam, 1791, a failure.

Seringapatam, 1799, a success.

Bhurtpore, 1805, a failure.

Bhurtpore, 1827, a success.

Sebastopol, Crimea, 1854–56, a success.

#### Passive and Active Influences of Fortifications.

The influence of artificial obstacles, fortifications of every description, on strategy is either *passive* or *active*.

Bridge heads and works to protect mountain defiles are *passive* in their effect when constructed solely for the purpose of defending the passage; that is, denying the passage to the enemy and delaying and hindering his advance.

But when the passage either across a river or through a mountain barrier is important—that is, when several main roads unite to cross the obstacle, when these roads lead through or by a great city, or lead from and to great centres—then the defence of such passages should be *not* passive but *active*. The influence of the point of passage under such circumstances will not be

confined to the passage itself or its immediate vicinity, but will extend to a greater or smaller area beyond. Its possession or loss will consequently have a far-reaching effect on future strategical movements. Hence such points are usually fortified positions of the first class, constructed not for the minor object of merely denying the passage of the obstacle to the enemy, but with the greater object of being used as a pivot of manœuvre, based on which an army may strike on any lines of approach that lead towards or radiate from that pivot, and on which, in the event of a reverse, the army may retire, rest, and make ready for fresh active efforts.

Since it is battles in the open that alone bring about decisive results, the *raison d'être* of fortresses, constructed with the object of exercising an active influence over an area of operations, is to assist and increase the power of forces available for action in the field. They may, and should, be defended to the end by their normal garrisons, but it is not the strategic *rôle* of active armies, destined to fight decisive battles in the open, to permit themselves to be shut up and besieged in fortified positions. Jomini says that, while fortified places are essential supports, abuse of them may, by dividing an army, weaken instead of add to its efficiency.

Fortresses, whether permanent, temporary or improvised, are not erected in order to allow the battle which is offered to be declined for ever; on the contrary, "they furnish a means to re-establish a broken equilibrium," to reseize the initiative, to resume the offensive: in short, to gain time to offer battle under better conditions.

The preceding remarks refer only to fortified positions and large fortresses designed to act as pivots of manœuvre, the influence of which is active; smaller fortresses, intended only to deny points of minor strategic importance to the enemy, have a humbler *rôle* to fulfil, the passive, and this they will best accomplish by an obstinate and prolonged defence.

Ciudad Rodrigo (siege and capture, January, 1812) and Badajos (siege and capture, April, 1812) are examples of two fortified towns which exercised an active influence on the strategy of a campaign. To Wellington the possession of these two places was of the utmost consequence, commanding as they did the two main communications between Spain and Portugal. So long as these two places remained in possession of the French, so long would all Wellington's preparations and plans for the invasion of Spain remain frustrated and thwarted. San Sebastian in the campaign of 1813 is a third instance. While it was in the hands of the French all his hopes for the invasion of France were kept in abeyance. But this once captured, the British general was free to commence those combinations which

in turn carried him across the Pyrenees, and by which he successively passed the Bidassoa, the Nivelle, the Nive, and the Adour.

The possession of Cawnpore, which covered the bridge of boats at that place, during the second relief of Lucknow, by Sir Colin Campbell (Indian Mutiny, 1857), was of great importance, as on it the safety of the bridge connecting Cawnpore and Lucknow depended. Over that bridge the convoy of women and children, and of the sick and wounded, as well as the relieving forces, had to pass. But its influence was passive, not active. Its importance was well understood by the Gwalior contingent of the mutineers, who attacked Cawnpore, defended by General Wyndham, with the object of destroying the bridge. The bridge, however, was preserved intact.

On the other hand, the influence of Delhi, the ancient capital of India, in the Indian Mutiny was decidedly active. Its assault and capture marked the turn of the tide in favour of the British. From the moment that Delhi fell, the majority of the mutineers understood that their cause was hopeless.

If the advance of an army be parallel to the general direction of a river, over which the points of passage are few and far between, and if these points of passage be fortified and in possession of the enemy, to continue the advance without first capturing and securing the defences of the passage and the passage itself would be a hazardous operation. Such an advance would lay bare the flank and the line of communications to the enemy in possession of the passage, affording him an opportunity for striking an effective blow, which he would not allow, unless very incapable, to pass unchallenged.

If the defences of the bridge include an entrenched camp, covering an army equal to manœuvring in the open field, and under command of a skilful leader, such a position passes from that of a mere fortified bridge head, the influence on strategy of which is passive only, to a pivot of manœuvre the influence of which is active. Pivots of manœuvre of this description, and so placed, have great strategie effects. They cannot be ignored; nor as a rule will a blockade suffice; they must be captured. Should there be more than one such position on a river which flanks the line of advance, the combination of the natural with the artificial obstacle presents a very strong line of defence. The position may be blockaded and egress thereby denied, but effectively to do so will seriously diminish the numerical strength of the advancing force, or implies a very great original superiority in numbers.

As this chapter is not a history of sieges nor a disquisition on the art of fortifications, permanent or temporary, in general or in detail, but is intended merely to touch on and point out the influence on strategy of artificial obstacles, fortified positions

and fortresses, etc., more especially when these are associated with natural obstacles, it is unnecessary to go deeper into the subject.

The main principles to be borne in mind are:—

1. Since decisive results are to be obtained, not from the capture or defence of fortified positions, but from victory or defeat of the armies in the open, fortifications of whatever nature are subordinate to strategy, and not strategy to fortifications.

2. The influence of fortifications on strategical manœuvres is intended to be passive or active, and therefore the commander of a fortified position, which has been constructed and designed for the express purpose of exerting an active influence on strategical manœuvres, does wrong if he acts in such a manner that the influence he exerts is *passive* and not *active*.

3. But these principles do not apply when (*a*) it is a case of the relief of a beleaguered garrison, or (*b*) the capture of a fortified place is the main objective of a campaign.

#### RETREAT ON THE LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS, 1810. (MAPS I., VI., AND IX.)

##### *General Situation.*

Napoleon, having resolved on the subjugation of Portugal, appointed Masséna to the chief command.

Under Masséna's immediate command were the three corps of Ney, Regnier and Junot, 86,000 men, with a reserve at Valladolid, 22,000 men, under Drouet. The French right under Serras, 15,000 strong, occupied the line of the River Esla, and to hold the line of communications there were 26,000 men under Bessières.

Wellington, whose total strength, exclusive of sick and wounded, amounted to but 45,000 men, foreseeing that the defence of Portugal with so great a disparity of numbers would be impossible, determined to retire gradually on the fortified position he had ordered to be prepared at Torres Vedras.

##### *Movements.*

Masséna, assuming the command of French forces on the 1st June, 1810, invested the fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo, held by the Spaniards.

Wellington took post on the River Agueda. His ulterior object being the defence of Portugal, he refused to lend any assistance to the garrison.

*June 11th.*—Ciudad Rodrigo surrendered.

Wellington retired before Masséna.

*July 24th.*—Rearguard action on the River Coa.

*August 15th.*—The French invested Almeida.

*August 26th.*—Almeida surrendered.

Wellington retreated down the valley of the Mondego, followed by Masséna.

Masséna drew to him Regnier, who was posted in the valley of the Tagus.

Wellington corresponded to this movement by calling in Hill, also on the Tagus, in front of Regnier.

*September 21st.*—Wellington's concentration in the valley of the Mondego was completed.

Wellington continued his retreat, but for political reasons, and in order to prove the newly raised Portuguese troops organised and disciplined by Beresford, decided to make a stand on the ridge of Busaco, a very favourable tactical defensive position. He accordingly took post on the ridge with 50,000 men.

*September 27th.*—Masséna with 72,000 men attacked the allied position, but was driven back.

*September 28th and 29th.*—Masséna, impelled by the necessity of acting up to Napoleon's orders, turned the position by a flank movement round the Allies' left.

*September 30th.*—The allied army broke up from their position on the ridge of Busaco, and, driving the population of the country within their reach before them, retired rapidly by Coimbra and Leyra to Torres Vedras.

*October 15th.*—The allied army concentrated behind the lines of Torres Vedras.

The French followed more slowly.

Trant, in command of the Portuguese militia, following in the French rear, captured Coimbra, containing 5,000 sick and wounded French soldiers.

Masséna's communications with Spain were closed by Trant's movements. Nevertheless Masséna resolved to continue the pursuit, and in the middle of October arrived "in sight of the lines of Torres Vedras, of which, strange to say, he had never before heard, but which now rose in appalling strength to bar his farther progress towards the Portuguese capital" \*.

The position of Torres Vedras consisted of three lines, one behind the other:

The first line from Albandra on the Tagus to the mouth of the Lizandre River, twenty-nine miles long.

The second line, roughly eight miles in rear of the first, ran from the Tagus to the mouth of the Lorenze River by the Sierra Serves and Monte Chique, twenty-four miles in length.

The third, at the mouth of the Tagus, was twenty-four miles in rear of the second, and was designed to cover an embarkation if such should be considered necessary.

\* Alison, "History of Europe."

The flanks of these three lines rested on impassable natural obstacles, the left on the sea, the right on the Tagus, in which lay a powerful British squadron consisting of twenty ships of the line and 100 large transports.

"On the whole lines no less than 600 pieces of artillery were mounted on 150 redoubts. Neither the Romans in ancient nor Napoleon in modern times have left such a proof of their power and perseverance; and they will remain in indestructible majesty to the end of the world, an enduring monument of the grandeur of conception in the chief who could design, and the nation which could execute, such a stupendous undertaking."\*

Warlike stores and rations had been collected, not only for the army, but for the population of Lisbon also, amounting to at least 400,000 people, who were thus amply provided with subsistence.

Wellington refused to be drawn into an attack on Masséna, and Masséna, on his part, found the lines far too strong to attempt an assault. The question was reduced to one as to who should starve first. Masséna, with 60,000 men and 20,000 horses to feed, first exhausted the country in his immediate vicinity.

*November 14th.*—Masséna broke up from before the lines, and, retiring about forty miles, took post at Santarem, a formidable defensive position.

Wellington issued from the lines in pursuit, but, finding Masséna so strongly posted, refused to incur any risks in an attack.

Here the operations, so far as they are connected with the lines of Torres Vedras, may be said to cease. Wellington being reinforced by troops from England, Masséna eventually abandoned Portugal by the road through the mountains by Guarda to Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, his original point of departure, and Wellington in his turn followed in pursuit.

#### *Remarks.*

Wellington, foreseeing that a retreat on Lisbon might be necessary, had, a year before that retreat took place, ordered the construction of the lines of Torres Vedras. In so strong a position he knew that he could defy the whole French forces. Having exhausted the country as far as possible, he reckoned on that fact compelling the French in their turn to retreat. His determination to adhere to this, his original plan for the defence of Portugal, was more than praiseworthy. None but a leader possessed of the greatest strength of mind and character would have foregone the minor chances of success which presented

\* Alison, *op. cit.*

themselves on more than one occasion to Wellington, for the sake of accomplishing the far greater end he had so sagaciously anticipated and decided to achieve. For this reason he refused to aid the Spaniards besieged in Ciudad Rodrigo; for this reason he declined to assist in the defence of Almeida; and for this reason he wisely decided to make no attack on Masséna's scattered line of march, when, after his defeat, that leader made a dangerous flank march in the presence of Wellington's victorious soldiers, elated by their recent victory. To forego such opportunities was to exhibit qualities rare even in the very greatest leaders of all times.

If the practical value of fortifications in strategy be measured by the success they exert on the whole fortunes of a campaign, then the lines of Torres Vedras must be included amongst the most brilliant examples of their proper use.\*

\* Authority : Alison, "History of Europe."

## CHAPTER X.

### DESERTS AND FORESTS AS OBSTACLES.

Deserts: The Somaliland and Soudan Campaigns—Forests: The Ashanti War.  
1873-1874—The Kumasi Expedition, 1900.

#### Deserts.

DESERTS are obstacles principally owing to insufficiency, or entire absence, of water. Other causes which render operations in a desert country difficult and arduous are scarcity of provisions and unfavourable climatic conditions.

The strategic points of a desert are its watering or drinking places.

The presence or absence of water not only limits the movements of an army operating in a desert, but also ties the line of communications to the line along which water is to be found.

The campaign in Somaliland furnishes a striking example of the watering places of a desert being its strategical points. The question of water entirely governs the strategy of the campaign. Its presence or absence not only limits the length of the marches, and the sites of camping grounds, but also rigidly fixes the strength of the various columns.

No enterprises are so arduous as those of defeating an enemy who, like the Somali, adopts Fabian tactics in desert tracts of great extent. The history of this campaign when published will probably be found to be a record not of beating an enemy in battle, but of overcoming almost insuperable difficulties connected with the want of water in vast desert plains, of keeping the transport in proper working order, of feeding the troops, of endeavouring to meet and engage the enemy, not in small actions which produce no results, but in a battle which will be so decisive as to put an end to the operations in hand.

Deserts, like mountain barriers and rivers, may either hinder or aid strategic combinations.

For instance, the Soudan campaign, 1884-85, was undertaken with the object of relieving General Gordon, besieged in Khartoum, and cut off from all outside communication by the

forces of the Mahdi. The shortest and quickest route to the capital of the Soudan would have been from some port on the Red Sea, and thence to Khartoum. But the difficulties of the desert march were deemed so great that the longer route by the Nile was decided upon. The result of the influence of the desert which lay between the Red Sea coast and the Nile, added to the tardy assent of the Government of the day to the starting of the expedition, was that the relieving force arrived too late.

On the other hand, in the Soudan campaign, 1898, Lord Kitchener's advance to Khartoum by the line of the Nile was aided by the desert to this extent, that the long line of communications back to Lower Egypt, flanked on either side by a desert, was by it covered and protected. Suppose the country on both or even one flank of that line to have been ordinarily fertile. The forces necessary for the advance on Khartoum must have been increased as an ordinary measure of precaution for the protection of the line of communications. The desert, in this instance, protected the long line of communications, and so far aided the British general in his advance on his objective.

The invasion of the Mohmand country by a British division under command of Brigadier-General Elles formed part of the operations of the North-West Frontier (India) campaign of 1897. This expedition was undertaken chiefly as a punishment for a sudden and quite unprovoked raid which this tribe had made on Shabkadr in the Peshawar Vale, distant only a few miles from Peshawar itself. Though not a "desert" campaign in the literal meaning of that word, the operations nevertheless proved of considerable difficulty, owing to the season of the year in which they were necessarily commenced, the scarcity of supplies obtainable in the country itself, limited for the most part to standing crops of Indian corn in the more fertile valleys, and especially the great want of water. In some valleys water from running streams was good and abundant, but in others the only source of supply was from muddy tanks, and the presence or absence of these tanks fixed the length of the marches and the camping grounds. The Mohmands quite understood this, and so soon as the direction of the march of the morning pointed to the probable camping ground of the force at night, they, in order to destroy the water supply, set about cutting the "bund" of perhaps the only tank from which water was to be had; and it was no uncommon sight for the leading patrols of the advanced guard to see bodies of men busily engaged in this occupation.

Mountain ranges and rivers, however high and rugged the former, and deep or broad the latter, have never stopped the passage of even the largest forces. But deserts have, and therefore of all obstacles they are the most formidable. The chief

difficulty they present lies not so much in scarcity or total absence of local supplies—for armies can carry food with them—but, as has been pointed out, in scarcity or entire absence of water.

British generals have several desert marches and operations in desert or equally inhospitable countries to their credit, the chief of which, apart from those already touched upon, may be mentioned :—

Sir David Baird's march, Egypt, 1801.

Sir Charles Napier's desert marches in Scinde, with regard to one of which Wellington is reported to have remarked: "It is one of the most curious military feats which I have ever known to be performed or ever read of in my life."

Various operations in and around Suakin.

Sir Redvers Buller, Bayuda desert.

#### Forests.

Woods are tactical rather than strategical obstacles, but forests, since they conceal the major movements of an army, may well be included under the latter category. The use of the balloon, from which the movements of troops when within sighting distance may be discovered, has lessened the disadvantages under which two opposing armies labour when forests happen to be included in the sphere of operations, and absolute secrecy of manœuvre and the surprising of an enemy are now more difficult than formerly.

#### ASHANTI WAR, 1873-1874.

The British Government, for reasons which it is needless to relate, having resolved to undertake offensive operations against the King of Ashanti, the command of the forces was entrusted to Sir Garnet Wolseley.

The port of disembarkation and the base of operations was Cape Coast Castle. The objective of the expedition was Kumasi, the king's capital, distant from Cape Coast Castle 140 miles. The River Prah divided this distance into nearly two equal halves, being seventy-four miles from Cape Coast. Prahsu on the Prah was selected as a secondary base point.

Practically, the whole route led through a primeval and virgin forest, through which it was in the first place necessary to cut a road. Trees had to be felled, and as far as Prahsu the road had to be drained and bridged, and sites cleared for camping grounds. No skilled labour was available, and as an instance of the difficulties offered by the road, it may be mentioned that 237 bridges were constructed between Cape Coast and Prahsu. One bridge alone, though only six feet wide, took twelve hours to complete, and this in spite of the fact that the finest material

in the world was available. Nevertheless, the road to Prahsu was in fair order before the march of the British troops commenced.

But the country on either side of the road remained a dense and impenetrable jungle. "The theatre of operations will be a great forest of gigantic trees, with an undergrowth of bush varying in the thickness. At some places men can get through the bush in skirmishing order, at others they will have to use their sword bayonets to open paths for themselves."\*

But the difficulties presented in the construction of the road and the nature of the forest country through which it ran were not the only ones to be encountered and overcome.

The climate was known to be deadly to British troops, and extra precautions had to be taken accordingly.

There were also almost insuperable difficulties in the matter of transport and supply. Before the British troops had disembarked the returns showed 6,000 carriers at work, and additional numbers were necessary.

Sir Garnet Wolseley arrived at the Gold Coast on October 2nd, 1873, and set about making the preliminary arrangements connected with the construction of the road, the collection of carriers for transport duties, the placing of supplies, and the selection and clearing of sites for camping grounds on the road to Prahsu.

Native levies and irregular troops commanded by British officers were gradually pushed towards the Prah and to Prahsu to hold the latter place. By the end of December 1,000 men and a small detachment of artillery with five guns and six rocket-troughs were there collected.

#### *Plan for the Invasion of Ashanti.*

The Prah was, on January 15th, to be crossed at as many points as possible by different columns.

Three main columns were detailed as follows:—

1. On the right a force of native allies to cross the river near Assum and to move upon Juabin.

2. In the centre the main body, consisting of British and other disciplined native troops, to advance from Prahsu, cross the Prah, and move by the direct road which led through the Adansi hills and Amoafah upon Kumasi.

3. On the left a force of native allies to advance by the track known as the Wassaw path on Kumasi.

Connection between these three converging forces was to be maintained by connecting links composed of minor forces of native allies.

Beyond containing part of the enemy's forces, and so preventing

\* Sir Garnet Wolseley's instructions for soldiers and sailors about to take part in the operations north of the Prah.

them from joining in the opposition offered to the centre or main column, these flank columns took no part in the actual attack on Kumasi. The separate movements of these flank columns need not therefore be described.

#### *Movements.*

*December 26th and 27th.*—Sir Garnet Wolseley and his staff left Cape Coast Castle, reaching Prahsu on January 2nd, 1874.

*January 1st.*—The disembarkation of the British troops commenced; they were sent forward to Prahsu in detachments as they disembarked.

*January 5th.*—An advance force of 500 native troops crossed the Prah and marched to Attobiassi.

*January 12th.*—Quisah, north of the Adansi hills, was reached and occupied.

*January 5th to 20th.*—The track north of the Prah was improved as far as possible.

*January 20th.*—The British regular troops, having arrived at Prahsu, commenced to cross the river.

*January 28th.*—The head of the column had reached Ahkankuassie, the rear was at Quisah.

*January 31st.*—The Ashanti army was found posted in a strong defensive position at Amoaful. An action took place in which the Ashantis were defeated.

*February 2nd.*—The column continued its advance from Amoaful.

*February 3rd.*—The head of the column reached Adwabin.

*February 4th.*—A bridge over the River Ordah having been constructed, the river was crossed, and the village of Ordahsu attacked and captured. On the same evening Kumasi was entered without further opposition.

*February 6th.*—There being no valid reason for the continued occupation of Kumasi, the capital was burnt, and the expeditionary force, having achieved its object, returned to Prahsu and on to the coast.

*February 12th.*—At Fommanah two envoys sent by the King of Ashanti arrived with 1,000 ounces of gold, the outward and visible sign of his complete submission.\*

In 1900 an expedition had again to be despatched to Kumasi, on this occasion for the relief of the Governor, Sir Frederic Hodgson, and a small British garrison, beleaguered in the fort.

On the sudden rising of the Ashantis, the troops in the vicinity, the local civil population, and friendly natives succeeded in gaining the shelter of the fort.

\* Authority : Brackenbury, "Narrative of the Ashanti Campaign."

The relieving force under command of Colonel Willcocks started from Cape Coast on June 5th, 1900, the garrison being successfully succoured on July 15th. As in the expedition of 1874, there were great difficulties to be overcome in the matter of supplies and transport. The marches led through, and the fighting took place in, great forests and undergrowth of the densest description. Unlike the expedition commanded by Sir Garnet Wolseley, no white troops were included in the relieving force.

British generals excel in desert and forest warfare, and their operations and method of conducting this description of warfare should be studied in detail.

In the Burma and Ashanti Wars the British army has learnt how to overcome the obstacles presented by dense bush. In the campaigns in Egypt and in the campaign in Somaliland, unrivalled experience has been gained as to the best methods to be employed in desert warfare, but the Indian borderland has made the army in India familiar with the strategy and tactics of mountain warfare.

## CHAPTER XI.

### CLIMATE AS AN OBSTACLE.

Advantages of Appreciating Effects of Climate in Warfare—Examples of the Influence of Climate on Strategy—Storms: March to Seringapatam, 1791—Mist and Darkness.

A GREAT advantage will be derived from an intelligent appreciation of the effects of climate in any theatre of war, since all modifications of atmosphere which affect alike both man and beast must be taken into due account, otherwise carelessness in the proper provision of the necessary clothing, equipment, and food may lead to grievous results. "Foresight, plenty of warm clothing, and good boots which will enable healthy men to pass with comparative impunity over mountains covered by snow and ice, will do much to diminish the severity of a winter campaign."\*

The records of our campaigns in the mountains of the North-West and North-East Frontier of India, an almost arctic region, as well as in the tropical climates of Africa, compare favourably with the operations of other armies under similar conditions.

The hygienic conditions which now prevail reduce the losses of men due to the rigors of winter, and to fever-stricken tropical climates; yet these losses have still to be reckoned with, and if they should unfortunately be large while active operations are actually in progress, they must be made good. A reserve force, living in healthy conditions and surroundings and cantoned as near as possible to the seat of war, so that losses may be rapidly replaced, will always be a wise precaution.

Thus, "though climate is not a determining feature in the art of war, it must, like all other natural phenomena affecting human life, be carefully studied by strategists."\*

In former times the hardships of a winter campaign and the difficulties of keeping masses of men properly supplied with food at a distance from their base of operations, along roads which in bad weather very soon became cut up, were

\* Dr. Maguire, "Military Geography."

esteemed so great that opposing armies went into what were designated as "winter quarters." Since the introduction of railways, by means of which armies in the field can be more rapidly and easily supplied, the hardships and difficulties of a winter campaign have been much diminished, and armies do not now go into "winter quarters." The strategy of a campaign is not consequently so much influenced by climate as used formerly to be the case. This statement, however, is only partly applicable to British strategy, for many of our campaigns now and in the future will be undertaken in tropical, semi-tropical; or, on the other hand, almost arctic regions, for in Africa and Asia there yet remain great districts untraversed by any railway system. When such is the case, the influence of climatic conditions in any proposed theatre of operations will, it is probable, still remain an important factor in the strategy.

A comparison of any of our campaigns on the North-West Frontier of India in hot and in cold seasons will serve as an illustration. The number of transport animals necessary for any given force in winter is almost double the number that would be required for a force of similar strength in the hot weather. These extra animals are required for transport of extra warm clothing and of food, and for the ambulance train, the strain on which in winter is sometimes exceptionally severe. These extra requirements, and the extra animals which are employed in their transport, lengthen the columns, which, it must be remembered, in mountainous regions can only move on narrow tracks; and these long columns require extra troops for their protection. All these factors reduce the mobility of a column, especially when operating in mountainous districts, and any reduction of mobility affects the strategy of a campaign.

#### Examples of the Influence of Climate on Strategy.

Marlborough followed up his victory at Ramillies by a vigorous strategic pursuit, and practically the whole of Flanders and Brabant, together with many fortified places, which had so far been in possession of the French, fell into the hands of the Allies. Marlborough then designed a move towards the Sambre, but "incessant rain and tempestuous weather forbade any further operations."\*

"Frost was fatal even in the Peninsula, and imprudence in the use of alcohol increased the dangers from bad weather. From these causes in January, 1813, no fewer than 150 of King Joseph's French Guards were frozen to death in the Guadarama Pass. Wellington's movements on the Agueda during the same

\* Hon. J. W. Fortescue, "History of the British Army."

months were hampered by snow. Yet Napoleon, in his eagerness to cut off Moore, had crossed the Sierra Guadarama Pass with but little loss in December, 1808, when it was covered with snow.

"How falling-outs and mortality may be diminished in the same climate is strikingly exemplified by a comparison of the operations of Wellington in the autumn of 1812 with those of the spring of the following year. During the march from Salamanca to Madrid in 1812, two men in ten fell to the rear, while during the march from the Douro to Burgo in 1813 not more than eight in 500 dropped on the march. No better proof could be afforded of the excellent management of the commander-in-chief when it is remembered that there were not less than 80,000 men moving forward in the same direction at the same time within touch of each other, with cavalry, artillery, tents, and baggage.

"Everything went wrong with the unfortunate Walcheren Expedition in 1809, when, already half spoiled by naval, military, and official incompetence, it was ruined by fever. The disease first showed itself amongst the troops in South Beveland, who had not the opposition of an enemy to keep their minds and bodies in healthy action; but after the fall of Flushing it broke out among the troops in Walcheren. The island, being so flat, is little better than a swamp. The ditches are filled with putrid vegetable and animal matter, the quantity of pure water is very limited. Nearly one-third of the native population is regularly attacked by fever every sickly season, in spite of their attention to cleanliness in buildings and person, and no remedy could be devised to check its ravages in the army. Even those who recovered from the disease itself had their constitutions so shattered that their physical power was materially diminished. Of 35,000 officers and men who returned to England, 11,000 were in hospital.

"Out of 24,000 British who perished in the Crimea only 4,000 were wounded; the remainder died of cholera and other diseases brought on by hardship and exposure, and no small proportion of the deaths were due to neglect.

"With regard to supply, transport, and sanitation during our recent operations from Chitral to Tirah and from Benin and Ilorin to the Egyptian Sudan, our troops on the whole seem to have been better managed in all these striking diversities of climate than has ever been the case before with the warriors of any world power except the Romans at their best."\*

Storms, mists, and sudden darkness would appear at first sight to be tactical rather than strategical obstacles. But a

\* Dr. Maguire's Essay on Climate in Tovey's "Strategy."

sudden and unexpected storm that interferes with and ruins a tactical movement—which but for its occurrence would otherwise have resulted in success—may have an effect so far-reaching on the consequent strategie result, that accidents of climate may be included as strategical rather than tactical obstacles. They differ from natural and artificial obstacles in that, being unexpected, they cannot be foreseen, and therefore provided for. Accidents of climate are a few of the “ever-changing influences and disturbing conditions” which may upset the best thought-out plans.

The battle of Waterloo may be quoted as a conspicuous example of the effect of a storm on the fate of a campaign. During the night of June 17th and 18th it rained heavily till 4 a.m., rendering the muddy fields of Belgium unfit for the movements of masses of artillery, in which arm Napoleon was very strong. Napoleon’s reasons for the delay in commencing the battle of Waterloo could have been three only :—

1. He expected Grouchy to join him;
2. His anxiety to let the soil harden in order the more advantageously to employ his artillery;
3. His desire to display his strength.

Of these three reasons it is sufficient to say with respect to the first that Chesney in his Waterloo lectures entirely demolishes the theory that Napoleon really expected Grouchy to join him on the morning of the 18th. The third reason was probably a consequence of the second, and the French general, in order to “affect beforehand the spirits of the unsounder portion of the motley army opposed to him,” employed the interval of waiting by reviewing his troops in the full presence of his enemy. The second reason was undoubtedly the real cause of delay. Had the ground been hard and firm, and had Napoleon commenced the battle at 7 a.m. instead of about noon, could Wellington have withstood Napoleon’s onslaughts till the arrival of the Prussians? Would the Prussians have been in time to make their presence on the French right really felt? It is to be remembered, of course, that the same storm which caused Napoleon to put off his attack till a late hour of the day delayed the Prussian march. In any case, the 16,000 fresh troops which Napoleon in the afternoon had to divert for the purpose of stemming the Prussian advance on his right flank would have been available to take part in the further attacks on the allied line.

### Storms.

#### MARCH TO SERINGAPATAM, MAY, 1791.

On the 13th May Lord Cornwallis, having advanced from Bangalore towards Seringapatam, the capture of which was his

objective, arrived at Arikera, about nine miles east of Seringapatam. Near Arikera, Tippoo Sultan, for the purpose of opposing any further advance of the British army, had taken up a position covering Seringapatam, so strong as to forbid any attack. Lord Cornwallis, therefore, determined by a night march to outflank Tippoo's main army, gain his rear, and so cut off his opponent's retreat to Seringapatam. The force which was to achieve this object (aided by the Nizam's cavalry) was ordered to parade at 11 o'clock on the night of the 14th May. "Before the hour appointed for the march a thunderstorm of unusual violence broke over the country. The cattle, scared by the lightning, and shivering under torrents of rain, could hardly be made to move. Almost every corps lost its way, the guides being bewildered by the incessant contrast of the dazzling light and impenetrable darkness; and Cornwallis, after advancing some four or five miles, found himself alone with a single company and a single gun. There was no alternative but to halt until dawn, and since the design must thus be betrayed to the enemy, to pursue it with such favour as fortune might grant in the open day."\*

With daylight Cornwallis's flanking movement and its object became apparent to Tippoo, who possessed sufficient ability to change his dispositions so rapidly and skilfully that the British general's bold stroke failed.

The effect of this thunderstorm on the strategy of the campaign was far-reaching. It turned what might have been a successful operation into failure and eventual retirement. Had the British army succeeded in its movement on the rear of the Mysore army, it is probable that the fall of Seringapatam would have followed, and in any case its capture would have been much facilitated. As it was, foiled in his stroke, Cornwallis moved round the northern and western sides of the fortress to Caniam-buddy for the purpose of effecting a junction with a British force, which under the orders of Abercrombie had from the Malabar coast penetrated into Mysore, and was then but forty miles distant. The junction of the two forces, however, never took place.

On the 21st May Cornwallis ordered Abercrombie to retreat to the coast.

On the 22nd May he himself was compelled to destroy the whole of his battering train and heavy equipment, and on the 26th May he was forced to commence a retreat on Bangalore. "Fasting, dispirited, and chilled by bleak wind and drizzling rain, the army, crept away in misery to the northward."\*

\* Fortescue, "History of the British Army."

### Mist and Darkness.

"A remarkable illustration of the utilisation of mist and darkness as a strategic screen is afforded by Washington's retreat across the East River after the battle of Long Island. An army of 9,000 men was in this instance withdrawn unmolested from the front of a victorious army of 31,000, camped only 600 yards from it. A brilliant instance of the use of darkness was the surprise and capture of Stony Point by General Wagen."<sup>\*</sup>

The approach of night prevented Marlborough and Eugène from completing and gathering the fruits of their victory at Oudenarde, 1708. Mists and darkness consequently, though on the one hand they may be an obstacle, in the true sense of the word, to one of two belligerents, yet on the other favour the opponent, if by their means he is enabled to diminish or escape the consequences of defeat.

\* Bigelow, "Principles of Strategy."

## CHAPTER XII.

### BASES.

A Base of Operations Must be Secure from Attack—Bases of Supply and Bases of Operations not Necessarily Identical—Various Forms of Base Lines : The Straight Base; the Base Concave Towards the Enemy; the Base Convex Towards the Enemy; the Base Re-entrant Towards the Enemy; the Base Salient Towards the Enemy—Considerations which Affect the Choice of a Base of Operations—Influence of the Extent of a Base Line as compared with the Theatre of Operations—Changes of Base—The Egyptian Campaign, 1882.

#### **Base of Operations Must be Secure from Attack.**

RECRUITS, necessary to make good the wastage in men caused by losses in battle and from disease, and all supplies of an army, such as food, munitions of war, etc., are transmitted from certain points at what may be called the home ends of the line of communications to the armies in the field operating at the other or foreign ends of the line of communications. But though the wants of an army are replenished by supplies transmitted from one or more particular points, these supplies have not originally been procured from those points only. The wastage both of men and supplies has been made good by reinforcements and by *matériel* which have been procured and drawn from the whole territories and resources of the nation at war, and collected within a certain area. This area is called the “base of operations.”

The base of operations, however small or great it may be, will be bounded towards the theatre of operations by a line which will mark the limit of safety of the area of the base of operations towards the theatre of operations. This line, which may be an imaginary one, or may be defined by some geographical feature such as a mountain chain or river, is termed the base line of operations, henceforth for convenience called simply the “base line.” On or within the base line will be certain base points, from which are despatched reinforcements of men and all warlike and other supplies to the armies in the field.

Within the base line the management of railways and roads will be in the hands of the forces relying on it; assistance may be expected from the inhabitants of the country; local officials will obey and carry out orders.

Since the part which bases of operations play in the strategy of a campaign is so very important, for on them the maintenance and movements of the armies in the field to a great extent depend, they must as far as possible be so situated as to be beyond immediate attack, or threat of attack, by the enemy's forces. This condition of security is very essential in determining and fixing upon the situation of bases of operations. Otherwise if the base of operations be open to attack, the enemy's forces will probably at once be set in motion and directed against it, in which event the whole efforts of the armies acting from that base will be confined to its defence, and all hope of initiative and carrying out the original plan of campaign will be lost until the enemy's attack be successfully repulsed and his forces driven away from the base. Moreover, an army, if defeated and compelled to retire on or within its base, should on arrival at its base be able to reckon on there finding for a time a certain measure of safety. The consideration of their safety from attack, and the amount of security which they may offer to beaten armies, are the principal factors which fix the situation of bases of operations.

Two illustrations of the maxim that a base of operations should be fixed with a due regard to immunity from attack by the enemy are furnished in the North-West Frontier of India campaign, 1897.

The valley of Peshawar formed part of the base of operations of expeditionary forces which were to be employed in the various north-west frontier expeditions. In Peshawar itself was collected a great quantity of stores and matériel. The Afridis suddenly attacked, captured, and sacked Ali Musjid, a fort which commanded the eastern outlet of the Khyber, leading on to Peshawar, and the Mohmund clans, suddenly bursting from their then unknown hills, raided and burnt Shabkadr. Both these places were distant a few miles only from Peshawar. The occupation of either place was a threat against Peshawar, and led to a certain amount of uneasiness as to its safety—an uneasiness not without cause, when it is remembered that either move might have led to serious internal disturbances on the part of the more unruly spirits of the native city. The danger passed; but under other conditions, and against civilised armies, attacks of a corresponding nature, followed to a logical conclusion—the attack of the base point itself, and the destruction of warlike matériel there collected—would have had most unfortunate results.

The valley in which lie Kohat and Hangu was a proposed base of operations flanking the southern boundary of Tirah. From this valley the advance into Tirah was to—and did—take place. In Kohat, at the entrance to the valley, a vast amount

of supplies was being collected and stored. The tribesmen suddenly collected in force in a pass which was distant some five miles only from Kohat. The concentration of the tribes at this spot begot a certain amount of uneasiness, and led to an action which was fought for the sole purpose of keeping the pass open and anticipating any meditated raid by the clansmen on Kohat itself.

A third instance, which will occur to all students of the South African war, was the danger which lay in collecting enormous and valuable stores at a point so close to the frontier as De Aar. This place was very weakly garrisoned, and at any period during the earlier and defensive phase of the campaign might have been raided, and the stores there collected carried away, by any determined Boer commando. The loss of the stores and supplies collected at De Aar might have had the effect of changing the whole strategy of the operations for the relief of Kimberley so successfully carried out later on by Lord Roberts, for without the necessary supplies at De Aar the combinations and movements for the relief of Kimberley, which led to immediate further decisive results, might at that time and over that particular area of operations have been impossible of accomplishment.

#### Bases of Supply and Bases of Operations not Necessarily Identical.

Except in civil wars in England, Ireland and Scotland, the wars of Britain have necessarily been wars beyond the seas. Originally, when expeditions were despatched from England's shores, the British Isles were invariably the only base of supplies. But as the Empire increased in size—for example, India, which gradually grew from a few unimportant settlements on the coast to a territory of enormous extent—the various countries and provinces conquered and acquired were themselves made to furnish such reinforcements of men, and supplies of warlike stores, as they might be capable of. Latterly the British colonies have contributed a share of men and *materiel*, and as this contribution of men and *materiel* is likely to continue in the future, the whole British Empire from henceforth must be regarded as original sources or bases of supply, for from the whole Empire—that is, from the four quarters of the world—men and stores will be despatched in transports over the seas to the coast of that country in which active operations are contemplated.

The sea route of transports conveying the troops and stores is the line of communications from various parts of the British Empire—the bases of supply—to the base of operations, and

these lines have been secure when the British fleet possessed command of the seas; insecure, when command of the seas did not exist, or was uncertain.

But once a landing on the coast was effected and secured, the coast line became the base line of future operations. And as the enemy's forces were driven more and more into the interior of the country, so the base line in some instances was advanced to a more convenient line in the interior, provided that line bounded an area within which safety and security to the armies operating beyond it were assured.

From what has so far been said, it is apparent that a base of supply and a base of operations may be identical, but are not necessarily so. Whether the two bases be identical or distinct has a resulting effect on strategy.

If the two bases be identical, and if an enemy should succeed in an attack, and should occupy and overrun the base, then he will have achieved a decided strategic success, which may finish the campaign, and from which, in any case, it will be very difficult to recover. But if the two bases be distinct, and the attack be on the base of operations only, then, though the enemy may therein capture stores and warlike *matériel*, though he may inflict untold damage, though his presence in the area occupied by him may be as a thorn in the flesh with respect to future operations, yet all is not lost. For the base of supplies being distinct and quite possibly unapproachable, a new base of operations may be taken up, fresh supplies may be poured into the new base, and the campaign continued.

And this leads to a further consideration, that of the area of the base of operations. The greater the area of the base of operations the greater will be the extent of the base line. And the greater the extent of the base line the more numerous will be the opportunities of changing the actual base of operations, either voluntarily, or should necessity compel. The change of a base of operations, one of the most difficult of all the operations of war, is a strategic manœuvre of itself, and is therefore separately discussed later.

In our campaigns in India the original bases of operations were the three factory towns, Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta; but as our possessions in India increased in size, and as the provinces and territories of Native States passed under our rule, and the government and internal condition of these States became established and secured, so the base lines of succeeding campaigns were more and more advanced into the interior, and were fixed and settled without reference to the coast line. The ports on the coast were merely points in the line of communications back to the British Isles, the original base of supplies, whilst the conquered territories themselves served as additional

bases of supply, both of men and stores, thus greatly diminishing demands on home resources.

Our campaigns in the American War of Independence furnish examples contrary to that of India, for on that continent our hold over no area in the interior ever became complete and secure. Consequently the sea coast, from the commencement to the conclusion of the war, remained the base of operations.

South Africa in the late war furnishes an example somewhat analogous to that of North America. For though the Boer forces in their advances towards the sea were repulsed and driven back, though the capitals of the two States surrendered, and the entire territories of the two Republics were occupied by British forces, yet the coast line remained the true base line throughout the campaign. For neither Cape Colony, the Orange Free State, nor the Transvaal, whether considered separately or as a whole, was safe and free during the war from the operations of the enemy. The co-operation of all the officials and the inhabitants of the country could not be relied upon, and railway and other bridges had to be constantly and vigilantly guarded to prevent their destruction, the lines of communications were not safe, but were liable to interruption at any moment; troops moved as if in an enemy's country. In the whole theatre of operations—with the exception of Natal in the later phases of the campaign—beyond the coast line there was no one base line which could be said to mark a limit of safety, and a true base line must mark a boundary, behind which armies may expect to find for a time absolute security. These remarks apply to the operations of the campaign as a whole, and not to the operations of particular forces considered separately.

A base line must not be confused with the frontier of any particular province or district, nor with the frontier line which separates the adjoining territories of two belligerents, for, though the frontier of a country and the base line of the forces of that country when at war may be coincident, they are not necessarily so.

For instance, an army which from one cause or another has voluntarily abandoned its frontier to the enemy could not possibly use that frontier as its base. Its base under such circumstances will be some area in its own territory withdrawn from the frontier, whence the necessary *materiel* can with the greatest convenience be collected and despatched to the army in the field.

On the other hand, an army which has assumed the offensive, has secured the exits along its frontier, and has invaded and penetrated an enemy's country, may adopt the frontier as its base line, in which case the frontier and the base line are identical. Such cases are treated in the next chapter.

### Various Forms of Base Lines.

The configuration of the base line, whether that line be the sea coast or a base line advanced in the interior of a country, is not always the same. This is evident if, for example, the case in which the sea coast is the base line be considered. The outlines of sea coasts vary in form. A line of coast may be straight, as the Coromandel coast of the Indian Peninsula in the Carnatic wars; it may be convex towards the enemy, as the Gulf of Pechili in the two China wars of 1860 and 1900; it may be re-entrant, as the north and west coasts of the Iberian Peninsula in the campaign of 1813; or concave, as the whole coast of the Iberian Peninsula when considered with regard to the whole operations within the Peninsula. Moreover, as a campaign progresses, favourably or the reverse, the extent of a base line will in all probability be increased or decreased, so that what was originally a base line of one particular form may change and may assume some other form.

It is, therefore, very desirable to inquire whether the configuration of a base line exerts any influence on the strategy of a campaign, and if so, how, and to what extent.

Reduced to simple geometrical forms there are five descriptions of base lines, namely:—

1. The straight base.
2. The base concave towards the enemy.
3. The base convex towards the enemy.
4. The base re-entrant towards the enemy.
5. The base salient towards the enemy.

With reference to what is stated hereafter regarding the particular advantages and disadvantages of each form of base, a word of warning is necessary, in that no account has been taken of the geographical features of the earth, such as mountain barriers, rivers, etc. These greatly affect all considerations regarding the various forms of base lines, and the selection and choice of a base of operations. But the influence on strategic manoeuvres of mountain barriers, rivers, etc., is fully discussed in the chapters dealing with obstacles, and it is unnecessary to refer to it again. The campaigns now to be quoted are as far as possible those in which inmountain barriers, rivers, etc., are either absent, or do not considerably affect the subject under consideration.

#### 1. THE STRAIGHT BASE.

In Plate VI., Fig. 1, if the line of advance of Red be perpendicular to A B, his base, then the strategical front of the Red army will be parallel to A B. If the enemy's (Blue) base C D be also parallel to A B, and if Blue's advance be perpendicular to C D, his base, then no particular advantage accrues to either side, for both Red and Blue cover their communications with

Plate VI.

Fig. 5.

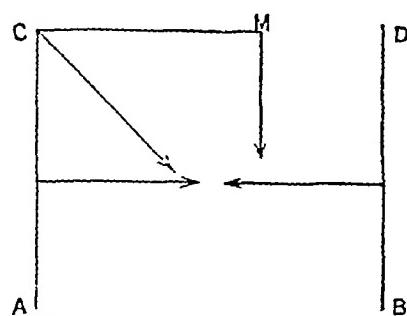


Fig. 6.

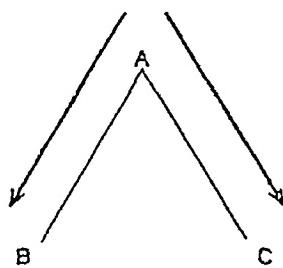
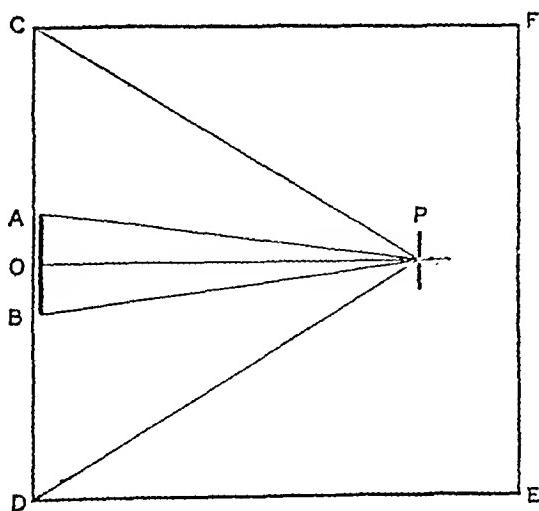


Fig. 7.



BASES.



their respective bases. Neither can strike at his antagonist's line of communications without equally exposing his own.

If the bases of two forces be roughly parallel to each other, the force which assumes the offensive should direct its march from some convenient point on the base line which is opposite to the particular objective aimed at, unless there happen to be special reasons for a contrary plan. For by so manœuvring, not only will the distance to be traversed be diminished and the line of communications with the base be more immediately covered, but the initiative once gained is more likely to be retained. If the force on the offensive start from some point on the base line not opposite or nearly opposite its objective, then the line of advance will be oblique, and will be longer and more oblique with respect to the base line the further the starting point on the base line may be situated from a point opposite to the objective.

But a line which is oblique in direction with regard to the straight line of the base will present and favour opportunities for attack by the enemy, and these opportunities will be the greater the more oblique the line may be.

If the bases of two belligerents be straight, but inclined towards each other, as in Fig. 2, the situation is somewhat changed. The safest line for the attack, with regard to its own base and its line of operations, would be to move on a line starting from a point opposite to and directed towards the nearest part of the opponent's base line, and should the objective be on or near this line, and opposite to the line of advance, the circumstances would be extremely favourable. See the line A C starting from a point A in the base A B towards C, a point on the enemy's base D E. The reader may compare for himself the advantages and disadvantages of the various lines of advance which may be adopted from either base.

The campaign of Sir John Moore in the Iberian Peninsula is a good example of the disadvantage of a line of advance, oblique with respect to "straight line of base."

The eastern frontier of Portugal was the land base of Sir John Moore, who moved north-east against the French line of communications with France. His objective point was the valley of the Carrion, held by Soult with 15,000 men. Napoleon, then in Madrid, retorted with a counter stroke in a north-westerly direction aimed against the British general's line of communications with Portugal. In consequence Sir John Moore, who was within striking distance of Soult, was immediately forced to retire.

## 2. THE BASE CONCAVE TOWARDS THE ENEMY.

(Plate VI., Fig. 3.\*.) The line A B C has a concave formation with respect to Blue's line of operations.

\* After figure in MacDougall's "Theory of War."

The advantage to Red's forces in this case is that, the flanks being advanced, an army operating from either flank can place itself more or less on the flank or rear of a hostile army, Blue, advancing towards A B C—evidently more the nearer Blue approaches.\*

Should Red, however, have to retire before Blue, behind the line A B C to defend that line, then Blue would be on interior lines with respect to Red's forces.\*

It is, of course, open to Red to operate from both the points A and C. Red would then be acting on "double lines of operations," usually a disadvantage. But if Red be numerically so superior to Blue that both the forces acting from A and C be equal in numbers to Blue, then the case is different, and the probability is that if Blue persisted in his advance towards B, he would be crushed.

But if Red and Blue's forces be numerically equal, then the operation by double lines from A and C entails a division of forces on Red's part. This division of forces would have the effect of rendering each of Red's armies less than Blue combined, in which case Red risks being beaten in detail.

Other advantages of the base concave towards the theatre of operations are:—

1. The line of communications of an army operating from a base concave in form will be protected by its configuration till it reaches a line joining the points of the arc; and when a forward movement beyond this line takes place, a secondary base point can be established on or near the line.

2. This form of base is also very convenient for the establishment of more than one line of communications, also for changing a line of communications from one line to some other more convenient line, if such a change be desirable or necessary.

3. The concave configuration of the base presents favourable opportunities for alternative lines of retreat to an army beaten in the field.

### 3. THE BASE CONVEX TOWARDS THE ENEMY.

(Plate VI., Fig. 4.\*.) "In this case Red moving from the centre of the arc B may more or less place himself so as to threaten the communications of a hostile army, Blue, advancing towards either flank A or C—evidently more the nearer Blue approaches." \*

A base convex towards the theatre of operations is a very safe form for a base line to assume. For whatever section of the arc is threatened by an enemy operating by a single line, the remaining section, being retired or withdrawn, will be more or less beyond the sphere of immediate operations, and the defence can therefore concentrate in safety on the threatened section of the

\* MacDougall's "Theory of War."

arc. Should the attack be on double or multiple lines, thus threatening more than one section of the arc, the defence posted behind the arc will be on interior lines as regards the attack.

On the other hand, this form of base line presents no advantages in the way of establishing more than one line of communications, or of changing the line of communications, and is very disadvantageous as regards alternate lines of retreat to an army beaten in battle beyond the arc.

In the Chinese war of 1860, and again in the war of 1900, the base of the allied forces was the sea coast. The coast of the Gulf of Pechili is convex towards Pekin, the objective in both wars. And this fact shortened the distance between the point of disembarkation and the Chinese capital.

#### IV.—THE BASE RE-ENTRANT TOWARDS THE ENEMY.

(Plate VI., Fig. 5.) In Figure 5, Red's base  $A C M$  is re-entrant with regard to possible lines of operations open to Red. A re-entering angle is a strong form of base.

If  $A B C D$  represent the theatre of war, and if Red and Blue each advance from their parallel bases  $A C$  and  $B D$ , then Red, if defeated, possesses divergent lines of retreat towards  $A C$  or  $C M$ . But if Red, instead of advancing from the line  $A C$ , should advance from  $M$  or from the line  $C M$ , it is clear that he at once stops Blue's further progress towards  $A C$ , or if Blue should persist in continuing in his line towards  $A C$ , then Red from  $M$  can strike in on Blue's line of communications.

The remarks noted as regards a base concave towards the enemy apply equally to this particular form of base.

The re-entrant form of base especially favours the operation of transferring or changing the base point from one point in the whole base line to some other point.

In the Peninsular campaign of 1813, Wellington's land base was the western coast of the Peninsula. Before the utter defeat of the French at Vitoria, the English general transferred his base to the north coast of the Peninsula, thus at once shortening his original long line of communications back to the coast through Portugal. The re-entering form of his land base, the sea coast, alone permitted this very advantageous change of base.

In the Tirah campaign of 1897 the base was re-entrant in form—the Hangu Valley from Thal to Kohat forming one side of the angle, and Kohat to Peshawar the other. The re-entrant form of this base permitted alternative lines of invasion into Tirah from two separate directions, namely, the line from the Hangu Valley *via* the Chagru Kotal, Sampaghā and Arhanga Passes, which was the line of invasion actually adopted, and the line starting from Peshawar by the Bara Valley, which was not

used. But in the withdrawal from Tirah, the movement was carried out not by the original line of advance, but by the two parallel lines of the Mastura and Bara Valleys towards the Kohat-Peshawar face. (See also the next chapter.)

The Egyptian campaign of 1882 provides a model example of the uses to which a base re-entrant in form may be put. The base line available for an advance on Cairo, the objective point, was the Egyptian coast running east and west, and the Suez Canal running north and south; Port Said, at the northern entrance of the canal, being at the apex of the two faces. The secret transfer of the British army from Alexandria, where it had in the first instance been landed, to Ismailia, on the canal, has been elsewhere noted.\* The move, entirely unsuspected, was accordingly a great surprise to the Egyptian army. That transfer, giving, as it did, an unexpected direction to the line of operations, was only permissible, it is obvious, on account of the configuration of the re-entrant base line. Arabi was led to believe that the line of invasion would start from one face of the angle, while, as a matter of fact, it took place from the other. Threatened from Alexandria, the real advance was made from Ismailia. The reasons which induced Sir Garnet Wolseley to adopt the line of the Suez Canal instead of the Egyptian coast may shortly be stated as follows:—

1. Ismailia on the canal formed the natural point of junction for the forces from Europe and India destined to take part in the expedition.

2. The distance from Ismailia to Cairo was 75 miles, while that from Alexandria to Cairo was 150 miles.

3. The advantages of the "hard" desert for the troops, guns, and transport to work over, and upon "which it was most desirable, if possible, to induce the enemy to fight a decisive action, where the full power of a better organised army could be employed against him." †

4. The short march across the desert was "to be preferred to an attempt to pass an army along the slippery and narrow banks of small irrigating canals" which crossed the country between Alexandria and Cairo. ‡

##### 5. THE BASE SALIENT TOWARDS THE ENEMY.

(Plate VI., Fig. 6.‡) "If  $B A C$  is a base salient towards the enemy, it is evident that an army acting from  $A$  threatens the communications of an army, Blue, which shall advance beyond  $A$ ; the advantage of interior lines is likewise great on the side of Red in proportion to the saliency of the angle. The disadvantage

\* See page 192.

† "Military History of the Campaign of 1882 in Egypt."

‡ MacDougall's "Theory of War."

of this configuration is that the more salient the angle, the weaker is the line of defence at that point and immediately on each side of it, because it is more exposed to the enemy's attacks."\*

The remarks noted as regards bases convex towards the enemy equally apply to this particular form of base.

### Considerations which Affect the Choice of a Base of Operations.

The choice of a base of operations is not always free, for physical obstacles such as mountains, rivers, and deserts, and also political reasons, often interfere with the selection.

Case in which a physical obstacle interfered with a selection of base of operations:—

In the Soudan campaign, 1885, for the relief of General Gordon besieged in Khartoum, the Red Sea littoral with a line of advance to Berber possibly offered the best base of operations, as the line from the sea-coast was the shortest and time was a decisive factor; but the difficulties to be encountered and overcome in the desert march to Berbera were deemed to be so insuperable that the longer advance by the valley of the Nile, with Lower Egypt as a base of operations, was adopted in its place.

Case in which political reasons interfered with the selection of a base of operations:—

In the first Afghan campaign of 1839 the most direct advance from the line of the River Sutlej was through the Punjab *via* the Khyber Pass. It was, however, deemed inadvisable to advance through the Trans-Sutlej provinces of the Punjab, inhabited by the Sikh nation, then ruled by Runjeet Singh, for fear of exciting suspicion in the minds of the people that an eventual occupation of their country was contemplated, a suspicion which, if aroused, would probably have led to an immediate outbreak of hostility on their part. For this reason, the Bengal army marched by a very roundabout route, south through Scinde, through the Bolan Pass and thence by way of Quetta, Kandahar and Ghuznee, to Kabul.

### Influence of the Extent of a Base Line as compared with the Theatre of Operations.

(Plate VI., Fig. 7.) If the length of a straight base compared with the whole theatre of operations be short, and if the army in the field is operating at a distance from that base, the army is practically limited to one line of communications, and in any case no great advantage would be derived from a change of the line of communications, if such a change should at any time

\* MacDougall's "Theory of War."

become necessary. For any new line which might be adopted must run close to the old line. Any threat or attempt on the part of the enemy to interrupt or cut in on one line will be followed by a similar attempt on the new line. In retreats, therefore, a change may delay but will not prevent a catastrophe.

If the length of the base be long compared with the theatre of operations, the length of the base will be of advantage in making a change in the line of communications, or adopting alternative or divergent lines of retreat; for any new line adopted will be more distant and more divergent from the old line according to the point of the base on which it is directed.

In Fig. 7, C D F E is the theatre of operations, A B a base line short in length when compared with the theatre of operations.

A Red army is at P, connected by any one of the lines P A, P O, P B, with the short base A B. It will be observed that not much benefit will be derived by changing any one line for any other line.

While if the enemy successfully attacks any one line it is probable that, owing to the propinquity of all the lines to each other, the evil results which may arise from the completion of such a stroke will only be delayed and not averted by the adoption of a new line.\*

If the same theatre of operations be taken, but the Red army at P be understood as operating from the longer base C D, the lines of communications become more separated, and lines of retreat more divergent, the more they may be directed in either case from or towards the extremities C and D.

These remarks as to the influence of the extent of a straight base line compared with the theatre of operations apply equally to bases concave and convex, re-entrant and salient.

The advantage of the extended base offered by India in all our campaigns on the North-West Frontier and in Afghanistan needs no special demonstration.

A nation which possesses command of the sea assures to itself all the advantages to be derived from a long or extended base, since, having command of the sea, it may select any one or more points it chooses on the foreign coast as its base point or points.

The disadvantages of an extended base consists in the fact that it is more open to attack, if the forces which operate from it be weak as compared with those of the enemy; and numerical inferiority sometimes leads to the great strategie error of attempting to guard as well as to operate from a base too extended for the number of troops available for offensive and defensive operations.

\* As regards a line of communications only (not of retreat), a short base is advantageous if several parallel roads lead from it to the strategic front.

To savage armies who can live entirely on the country, the configuration of their own base, if they have one, is of but little or no importance.

If the commander of an army be absolutely sure of beating his enemy in the field whenever and wherever he may meet him, he need neither consider the direction of his line of advance with regard to the configuration of his base of operations, nor need he take "anxious thought" regarding his line of communications. In such cases, the influence exerted by the configuration of a base of operations is practically nothing, or of but very little account.

But the case is otherwise when two civilised armies meet each of whom is dependent on its lines of communications. The configuration of a base line in civilised war does vitally affect the strategy of a campaign, not only during the opening movements but throughout the whole operations.

And, summing up the conclusions generally arrived at, it may be stated that the configuration of a base line is of special importance when owing to its position and extent it—

- (1) Shortens or lengthens a line of communications.
- (2) Protects or lays open a line of communications.
- (3) Offers opportunities for making strokes at an enemy's line of communications.
- (4) Favours divergent lines of retreat to a force which has been strategically placed at a disadvantage, or has been beaten in battle and driven off its original line of communications and of retreat.
- (5) Enables a general operating from one section of a base line to change to some other section of the whole base line.

#### Changes of Base.

To change a base of operations is a strategic manœuvre often employed, and one which has been frequently attended with the happiest results.

The reasons which usually induce a general to change his base may be summed up as follows :—

1. To shorten a long or inconvenient line of communications.
2. The original base occupied at the commencement of a campaign has in practice been found unsuitable.
3. There is a new strategic objective.
4. To escape a threatened or actual strategic stroke of an antagonist.

The strategical manœuvre of changing a base must be considered under two aspects—

- i. The case in which a general may abandon and cut himself off altogether from his original base and line of communications

with the intention of marching towards *some other point in the theatre of operations*, and there adopting a new line of communications, and operate from a fresh base.

ii. The case in which a general, *from the position in which he may at the moment find himself*, abandons his original line of communications and base, and adopts a new line of communications connected with a new base.

The operation involved in the former is naturally more dangerous than that incurred in the latter change. The army which puts into practice the former manœuvre, if seriously interrupted in its march, if defeated by the enemy in its march, or if from any cause it fails to reach that point where it hopes to pick up a new line of communications connecting with a new base, would probably be ruined. Both the cases above noted are affected by the following conditions:—

(a) The change may be a voluntary one, that is, undertaken at the will and pleasure of the commander.

(b) The change may be one of necessity, that is, forced on a commander by the superior strategy and tactics of his opponent, or to lessen the consequences of defeat.

(c) The new line of communications and new base may have been anticipated, in which event the new line of communications will have been prepared and will be ready for transit of supplies, and those supplies will have been collected; or

(d) The change may not have been anticipated, in which case, even if the change be a voluntary one, difficulties will ensue until the line of communications is in proper working order, and supplies have been collected at the new base.

The fact of being able to change a base of operations, and to take up a new line of connecting communications, confers many advantages in strategy. By possessing the power and means of changing a base of operations, not only are the movements both of small and of large bodies of troops much assisted with respect to freedom of action, but also the area of operations over which they may manœuvre with safety is much increased. For if a general is so fortunately situated as to be able, at will, to change his base of operations, his forces can penetrate further and extend over a greater area of country than they otherwise with safety could do. If outmanœuvred, the power of changing his base and his line of communications will often permit a general to get out of a difficulty and to recover himself.

General Nott, in the Afghan campaign of 1842, in his retreat to India from Kandahar by the roundabout way of Ghuznee, Kabul, and the Khyber Pass, one of the most curious methods of retreat furnished by military history, abandoned his line of communications through Quetta, with his base of operations in Scinde, and on his junction with General Pollock

at Kabul adopted that officer's line of communications *viii.* Gandamak and the Khyber Pass, with the advanced base in the Punjab.

Sir Donald Stewart's march from Kandahar to Kabul is another example in the same area of operations of moving from one point to another in order to take up a new line of communications which should connect him with a new base. Attacked during the march, Sir Donald Stewart fought and won the battle of Ahmed Kehl. The reader may imagine for himself what the consequences to the British forces would have been had the result of the battle been a defeat instead of a victory.

In the two cases above quoted, both generals voluntarily abandoned for a period of time, and cut themselves off entirely from, their original base. The gaining of a new line of communications with a fresh base of operations depended in both instances on gaining their objective, which in both cases happened to be the same point, namely, Kabul. In the Corunna campaign, 1809, and the Vitoria campaign, 1813, two conspicuous instances in European strategy have already been cited of the great advantage of being able to change a base of operations. In the former campaign Sir John Moore was *forced* to abandon his base at Lisbon, owing to Napoleon's counter stroke on his own line of communications with that place through Salamanca. He saved himself by a retreat through the northern provinces of Spain to Corunna, where he embarked his troops. In the latter campaign Wellington *voluntarily* abandoned his forward base, the frontier of Portugal, for a new base of operations, the north coast of Spain, thus greatly reducing the length of his line of communications. In both the examples quoted the British generals abandoned their line of communications and bases for new lines and new bases, but, unlike the cases of Generals Nott and Stewart, Moore and Wellington had not to march through hostile country (in traversing which they would have been exposed to attack) to a new sphere of operations, and then pick up a new line of communications which should connect their armies with a new base, but made the change from their own immediate sphere of operations, the latter being a far simpler operation than the former.

Both these instances are contrary to the cases of General Nott and Sir Donald Stewart and to that of Sir Frederick Roberts in the march from Kabul to Kandahar, who all three marched from one area of operations to another, and thus regained a new line of communications connecting them with their bases.

But when Sir Frederick Roberts at Kabul abandoned his line of communications by the Kurram Valley to Kohat with India for that of the Khyber to Peshawar, the change was one made from the area in which he at the time was. These changes all

illustrate the advantage which may be derived from operating from an extended base.

Lord Roberts, after the surrender of Cronje at Paardeberg, voluntarily abandoned his line of communications with his base at Cape Town, and from the area in which he was immediately operating made the cross march to Bloemfontein, where he regained new lines of communication which connected him with base points at East London and Port Elizabeth, the difficulty of the operation in this case having been much increased owing to the unfortunate loss of a large convoy at Reit River, a loss which, it may be added, was one of the causes of the long halt of the army at Bloemfontein before it became possible to move north.

The various considerations quoted as affecting the operation of changing a base may be recapitulated as follows:—

1. In changing the base of operations, has the commander who meditates the change first to march his army to some new area of operations and thence adopt a new line of communications and operate from a fresh base, or is the proposed change to be made from the area in which he may at the time be acting?
2. Is the change a voluntary change on the part of the commander, or is it one of necessity to get out of a difficulty and thereby recover himself?
3. Have the new line of communications and fresh base about to be adopted been prepared and got ready for work, or have they to be prepared and put in working order after the change has been effected?

#### EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN, 1882.

The Egyptian Campaign of 1882 is an example not of an actual change of base, but of a line of advance made from a base and from a direction quite unexpected by the enemy. The original plan of campaign, as drawn up by Sir Garnet Wolseley, had always contemplated an advance on land from the line of the Suez Canal,\* and all the details necessary for a campaign across the desert from the line of the Suez Canal had been settled some time prior to the start of the army from England. The necessity of landing troops for the protection of Alexandria after the bombardment, followed by the stratagem of there landing the troops as they arrived from England, for the double purpose of deceiving Arabi as to the real line and direction of the advance upon Cairo and of keeping the troops till the Canal had been seized and preparations for the forward movement from Ismailia, the selected base point, were finally completed, went far to aid Sir Garnet Wolseley's strategy. The Egyptian leaders, deceived by the disembarkation of the English forces

\* A fact not usually known to those who have not studied the operations of the campaign.

at Alexandria, and by feints from the town, assumed that the British line of operations would start from Alexandria as a base point. Sir Garnet Wolseley, however, having first made sure of the Canal, secretly transferred his army from Alexandria to Ismailia, and so well was this movement concealed from all knowledge of the enemy that it was not till a year afterwards that Arabi, then a prisoner of state in Ceylon, became aware of the fact that the army which had captured his entrenchments at Tel-el-Kebir was not a new force, but consisted of the troops which had faced his lines at Alexandria. Ismailia and the outposts along the Canal, Nefesha, Magfar, Tel-el-Mashuta, Mahsano, and Kassassin, having been secured, a necessary delay occurred for the collection of warlike stores and supplies of food at the base. Then, when all was ready, the British general assaulted and captured the lines at Tel-el-Kebir, and after the battle the mounted troops were at once pushed forward to Cairo, which they safely reached and occupied.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### CONFIGURATION OF FRONTIERS.

The Various Configurations of Frontiers—Frontier Convex towards Enemy—Frontier Re-entrant towards Enemy—Frontier Concave towards Enemy—Frontier Convex towards Enemy—Right-angled Frontier—Salient Projection when Forces of Two Belligerents are Approximately Equal—Salient Projection Defended by a manifestly Weaker Force.

LIKE bases, the various outlines or shapes of frontiers may be reduced to five geometrical forms, corresponding to the five geometrical forms of bases. These are :—

- 1. The straight frontier.
- 2. The frontier concave to the enemy.
- 3. The frontier convex to the enemy.
- 4. The frontier re-entrant to the enemy.
- 5. The frontier salient to the enemy.

#### The Two Cases.

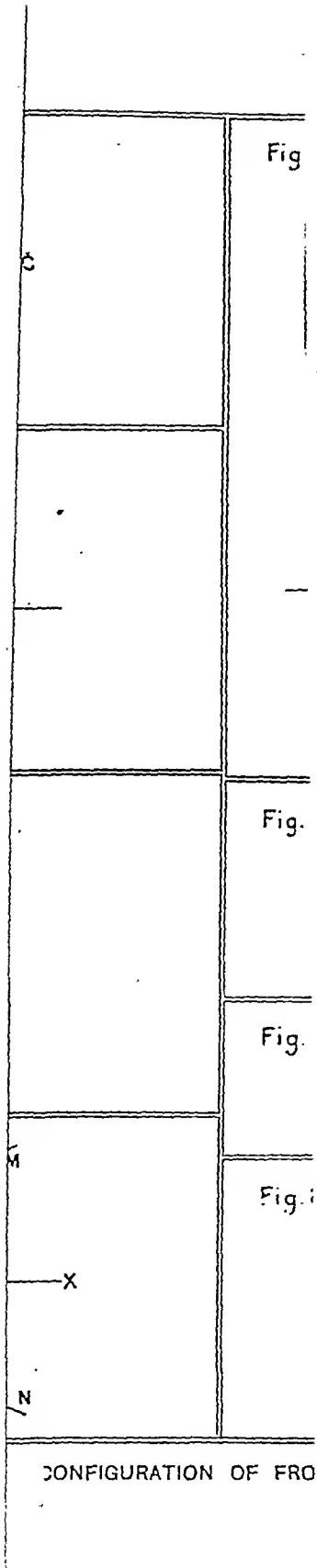
When two nations with a common frontier resolve on war, one of two separate conditions at once arises.

One nation, either from admittedly inferior forces, unpreparedness for war, slower mobilisation, or political reasons, will decide on adopting the defensive, abandoning to its antagonist the offensive, and with it the initiative, in which case the defence will not at once seek a decisive issue on or near the frontier, but will withdraw its forces from the frontier and await the enemy's attack in its own territory.

Or both nations, equally ready and prepared for war, will at once set their armies in motion, and will each endeavour to assume the offensive, in which case early decisive issues may be expected to take place on or in the immediate proximity of the frontier common to both belligerents.

In either case the configuration of the frontier intimately affects the strategy both of the offence and the defense.

Case 1. When one belligerent, owing to superiority of numbers or being more prepared for war, at once assumes the offensive, makes himself master of the exits of the frontier, and invades and penetrates his opponent's territories; and conversely, when one belligerent, owing to inferiority of numbers





or being unprepared for war, voluntarily abandons its frontier line, the effect of the configuration of the frontier must be considered with respect to—

- (a) The army which has assumed the offensive;
- (b) The army which has confined itself to the defensive.

Case 2. Both belligerents assuming the offensive, the opening movements and actual contact of the opposing armies take place on, or in close proximity to, the common frontier.

#### CASE 1.

In Case 1 (a) it is natural to conclude that the nation which has assumed the offensive, whose armies have possession of the exits on the frontier, and have in addition invaded and penetrated into the territories of its enemy, will advance its base line to the frontier, in which event the whole or part of that frontier will be the base line. In other words, the frontier and base line of the nation which has assumed the offensive and invaded its enemy's territories are identical. All, therefore, that has previously been said regarding the form of a base line, and the influence which that form exerts on the strategical movements of troops, is in this instance equally applicable to frontier lines, which become base lines.

Case 1 (b), the army which has confined itself to the defensive. In this case one belligerent, whether on account of inferior numbers or unpreparedness for war, has voluntarily abandoned its frontier.

The base of the force on the defensive should be some suitable area, withdrawn from the frontier, and selected for convenience of supplies to the army in the field, and which will at the same time offer a certain amount of security to that army if compelled to retreat into that area. Other considerations and reasons on which will depend the selection of a base are the character and direction of natural obstacles such as in mountain barriers and rivers, and the position and strength of artificial obstacles such as fortresses and entrenched positions, both of which will delay and obstruct the enemy's advance, and will, of course, exercise an influence, and a decisive one, on the selection of the base; but the first consideration will be the direction and position of the base as compared with the invaded frontier line, for that frontier line, it must be remembered, will, at the opening movement of the campaign, be the base line of the enemy's forces which have assumed the offensive.

#### *Frontier Convex towards the Enemy.*

In Plate VII., Fig. 1, Blue has assumed the offensive, immediately on the outbreak of hostilities, and occupied and secured the exits across the frontier A B C.

Red has abandoned its frontier line A B C convex towards Blue, and has elected to stand on the defensive.

The question Red must ask himself and decide will be the position of his base, and this answer will be determined, in spite of natural and artificial obstacles, by the configuration of the frontier line common to Red and Blue. Red obviously could not adopt as a base line the line D E which fronts towards one portion of the frontier A B, for the whole frontier has been abandoned to Blue, and all the exits on that frontier are in Blue's possession. From the point C, Blue would be in a position to invade Red's base of operations in rear and turn the whole line D E. But in the chapter on bases it was laid down that in fixing on an original base line that line should be secure at the opening movements of a campaign from attacks by the enemy. Red must withdraw and select a more secure position for his base, say the line D F. This illustration sufficiently serves to prove in general that, even if abandoned, the configuration of a frontier exercises an influence on the strategy of a campaign. For owing to the configuration of the abandoned frontier the enemy's forces will at the commencement of operations be more or less advantageously situated strategically, according to the facilities which the form of the abandoned frontier may offer for future offensive movements.\*

#### *Frontier Re-entrant towards the Enemy.*

The ease of a re-entrant frontier abandoned by an army on the defensive. (Plate VII, Fig. 2.)

Suppose A B C to be a frontier, re-entrant to and abandoned by Red and occupied by Blue.

If the objective of Blue be any point X on or near the prolongation of a line bisecting the angle A B C, Blue by directing his advance through B is at once on the shortest line towards his objective, and as Red has abandoned his frontier lines A B, B C, Blue's flanks are safe until such time as he advances beyond B at the apex.

On the other hand, suppose Blue's objective to lie in the direction M or N, Red, for the defence of M or N, whichever the selected objective of Blue may be, must concentrate in that direction, thus abandoning more territory still.

For if Red does not concentrate on the threatened objective, but keeps his forces at both M and N, then Blue through B will interpose between Red's separated forces at M and N and may beat them in detail; or Blue may fall with all his forces concentrated on M or N, in which case Red may have to fight at the threatened point, without chance of help from that part of

\* The same remarks are equally applicable to a frontier salient towards the enemy.

his forces at the other point. In other words, Red fights a probably decisive battle with less force than he really has available.

Red might counter any advance to either objective, say M, by an advance towards the frontier B C. Such a stroke would be sound strategy, and would, given favourable conditions, be extremely effective. But re-entrant frontiers, it must be observed, are usually bounded (demarcated) by geographical features, as mountain ranges or rivers. It is improbable that the force assuming the offensive will commence a forward movement without having first safeguarded and secured, by all the means in its power, that part of the frontier from which a counter stroke of the nature now discussed could be made. The artificial, in combination with natural, obstacles which block the roads and passes leading through that frontier are here of great importance. And that these should not be so strong as to forbid any attempt of the enemy to force a passage through them is of importance. Otherwise the attempt may not be made, in which event the enemy will concentrate and limit his efforts solely to the defence of the selected objective, thus being forced to act in the very manner which it should be the aim of the offence to frustrate.\*

#### CASE 2.

Both belligerents assuming the offensive, the opening movements and actual contact of the opposing armies take place on, or in close proximity to, the common frontier.

#### *Frontier Concave towards the Enemy.*

Let A B C (Plate VII, Fig. 3) be a frontier concave towards Blue. The opposing forces of Red and Blue have met on the rough line of the common frontier A B C, with the result that Blue is defeated.

If the site of actual contact be at or near the centre of the arc as at B, Blue's natural line of retreat at first, and so long as his forces are within the segment A B C, should be more or less direct to his rear towards X. Otherwise, if the line of retreat takes a direction as towards M or N, Red might be able by a turning movement to throw Blue against his (Red's) frontier, and a second defeat in such a position would drive Blue into Red's territory.

If contact took place near the centre of the arc, once Blue had retreated beyond the line A C it is probable that the whole country contained by the segment A B C would automatically fall into Red's possession. If so, Red could advance his base of operations up to the line A C and feel reasonably safe as regards his line of communications from B to O, for it would be a certain

\* The same remarks are equally applicable to a frontier concave towards the enemy.

extent be guarded owing to the configuration of the frontier line.

But if contact takes place near one of the horns of the arc, the possession of the country included in the segment A B C would not necessarily follow.

#### *Frontier Convex towards the Enemy.*

Let A B C (Plate VII., Fig. 4) be a frontier convex towards Blue.

As before, Red and Blue have met on the common frontier A B C with the result that Blue is defeated.

If the site of the contact takes place at or near the centre of the arc as at B, then, unlike the case of the concave frontier, Blue has three main lines of retreat. If X be Red's objective, a retreat towards X and the occupation of a defensive position as at P will cover X directly; but a retirement towards M or N, and a position between M B or N B, will equally cover X, for any position on the line M B, or N B, will be on the flank of an advance by Red towards X.

In this instance, the configuration of this form of frontier does not assist Red in any advance which he may make beyond his own frontier. The further Red penetrates into Blue's territory, the more care must be taken to safeguard and protect his line of communications.

The same arguments equally apply to frontiers angular, that is re-entrant or salient, in their form, except that the advantages and disadvantages of both forms are if anything more emphasized.

From a study of the preceding examples it is evident that, as with base lines, a frontier which is straight in form possesses the least influence on strategical movements of opposing forces, whilst the frontier concave or re-entrant is more favourable to the side winning the opening battles of a campaign than one convex or salient.

#### *The Right-angled Frontier.*

Cases 1 and 2 (Plate VII., Fig. 5), in which the angle is salient to the force defeated in the opening battles.

Case 1. If the opposing forces of Red and Blue come into contact on any one face of the angle only, say A B, if Blue be driven back, and retreats in a direction parallel to the other face B C, on the line O P, then Red, if he has other forces at disposal, is favourably situated, F K, for striking in on the flank of that retreat from the other face of the angle, or interposing between Blue and Blue's base.

Case 2. If contact between Red and Blue takes place on both the faces of the angle and Blue be defeated, it is probable that the two separated forces of Blue will make a concentric retreat, for the purpose of effecting a junction as at O. Such a

retreat would put Blue on interior lines as regards the forces of his antagonist. Should Blue retire on divergent lines as towards M and N, the position would be reversed. Red would be on interior lines; the further Blue retreated, the further would his separated forces be likely to be driven asunder.

Cases 3 and 4, in which the angle is re-entrant to the defeated side.

Case 3. If contact takes place on one face of the angle only, say A B, and Red be defeated, any advance of any other part of Red's forces from a direction D E would seriously interfere with, if not stop altogether, Blue's pursuit of the main body of Red's defeated force, till arrangements were made to contain the force advancing from the flank D E.

Case 4. If contact should take place on both faces and Red be driven back, the retreat of Red's two separated forces would, from the conformation of the frontier, be on divergent lines: the further the retreat, the more would the separated forces of Red be driven asunder. In order to effect a junction, either one separated force must make a wide turning movement, or both forces must make a turning movement to incline to each other. In either case Blue, being on interior lines, would be in a position to anticipate the junction.

The strategical flanks of Red's two separated forces are obviously the inward flanks, or the flanks nearest the apex of the angle.

After the first phase of the operations in the Hangu Valley, North-West Frontier campaign, 1897, and prior to the commencement of the Tirah expedition against the Afridi and Orakzai clans, the British frontier ran from west to east, approximately along the Sainana range bounding the north side of the Hangu Valley to Kohat, thence the road connecting Kohat with Peshawar running from south to north may be taken as the frontier line. Kohat, then, was the apex of a frontier re-entrant in form. This frontier enclosed the highlands of Tirah on two sides. Sir William Lockhart, the Hangu Valley being in his possession, was thereby enabled to penetrate to the centre of Tirah by the line of the Chagra Kotal, Sampaha and Arhanga Passes. A brigade under General Hammond was posted at the entrance of the Bara Valley for the double purpose of securing Peshawar against any contemplated raid on the part of the Afridis by the line of the Bara Valley, and at the same time of co-operating, if necessary, with Sir William Lockhart's own advance into Tirah, for the line of the Bara Valley presented an alternative route into Tirah, and by its means a British force could arrive in the rear of any great concentration to oppose Sir William Lockhart. As a matter of fact, General Hammond's force was not called upon to assist in

the actual invasion of Tirah. Its presence at the entrance of the Bara Valley not only protected Peshawar, but probably had a disturbing influence on the counsels of the Afridi headmen, who could not divine the uses to which this force might be put, and its presence also was of assistance later on in reaching forth a helping hand to the final withdrawal of that part of the British general's force which retired from Maidan Tirah by the Bara Valley route.

*Case of the Salient Projection Abandoned by the Army on the Defensive, and Neither Belligerent Possessing the Advantage of Superiority of Force over the Other.*

In Fig. 6 (Plate VII.) Red is advantageously situated.  $M$ , Blue's objective, will probably be some important town. Red can mass his troops in its neighbourhood, throw in supplies, and use  $M$  as his pivot of operations.

If Blue advance towards one of the two faces only, Red with his united forces is in a position to oppose him without fear of his retreat on  $M$  being cut until he is defeated and driven off his line with  $M$  in a decisive battle.

On the other hand, should Blue operate towards both faces, Red in the neighbourhood of  $M$  is in a central position; Red is on interior lines with respect to Blue, and is not likely to forego his opportunity. By interposing between the separated fractions of Blue's forces, Red, turning first on one and then on the other, may beat both in detail.

These remarks also apply to a frontier convex towards the enemy when the enemy's objective lies within the arc, but the degree to which they are applicable in both cases will depend on the degree of the angle or the convexity of the arc.

This is clear from Fig. 7. In I., other factors being equal, Red is more advantageously situated at  $M$  than is Red at  $M$  in II.

In I., if Blue attack on one line only, from whatever direction he approaches, he is compelled to traverse a certain distance of Red's territory before reaching  $M$ . In II., one short line, if he cares to employ it, is available for Blue.

And again, in I., if Blue advances on double or more lines, unity of direction and future junction of his forces will probably be more difficult than in II.

*The Salient Projection Defended by a manifestly Weaker Force.*

In the opening remarks of this chapter it was assumed that the admittedly inferior force entirely abandoned the frontier; but the case often arises when the weaker force, either because it does not fully recognise its own weakness, or impelled by im-

perative political considerations, refuses to abandon the frontier, and attempts to hold it with the whole or part of its forces.

Suppose, as a general illustration, the case of a frontier A B C salient to the enemy Blue, but only partly abandoned by an inferior force, Red, on the defensive (Plate VII., Fig. 8).

The line E D represents Red's base, withdrawn and outside the angle formed by the two faces A B, B C. Blue has assumed the offensive, has occupied the frontier line A B C, and is in possession of its exits. Red has not entirely abandoned the salient, but holds, with part of his forces, a forward position in the salient as at X. The line of communications and of retreat of the forces at X, back towards the base D E, is liable to be cut at any moment by Blue operating on either or both sides of the faces A B, B C; or Blue may overwhelm Red at X by a combined attack from the front and flanks.

Unless, therefore, Red's force at X be sufficiently strong to oppose Blue's successfully at X, and unless his line of communications be secured, to abandon altogether the territory included in the salient will be the best plan.

But voluntarily and entirely to surrender a strip of country into the enemy's hands requires great strength of character and moral courage on the part of the military and political leaders of a nation. To abandon territory without a fight for its defence is evidence of inferiority at the moment, and has a discouraging effect on the spirits, not only of the troops, but of the whole nation. If the inhabitants of the territory it is proposed to abandon be loyal they will not appreciate this step. If in addition there be in that territory some large manufacturing town, or if it be the centre of some great trade interest, it may be taken for granted that on the part of its inhabitants every endeavour will be made, and every influence set in motion, to prevent the proposed abandonment.

On the other hand, in the event of the inhabitants of the abandoned district being disloyal, the effect of retirement will be not only to afford the enemy extra sources of supply, but also to place the services of the inhabitants at their disposal, and may, too, encourage and increase disloyal hopes in the minds of other discontented people living outside the limits of the country to be surrendered.

The general in whose hands lies the conduct of the campaign, and the political leaders of the nation, are thus placed in this awkward dilemma. Should territory be abandoned to the enemy, if the inhabitants of the abandoned territory be loyal, their discontent is aroused, and the spirits of the whole nation are discouraged; if the inhabitants be disloyal, their services are at the free disposal of the enemy, and the hopes of other discontented subjects are encouraged.

In either case the resources of the territory abandoned are so much extra gain to the enemy.

If no territory be abandoned, but a decision be come to in favour of holding a forward position, the risk of the troops being overwhelmed in the forward position by converging masses of the enemy must be faced. In the endeavour to reconcile two conflicting courses, a decision to steer a medium plan may be arrived at, namely, not wholly to surrender the territory to the enemy, but to attempt its defence by a force manifestly too weak for the purpose.

Military history affords numerous examples of the evil consequences of holding a forward position in such circumstances with insufficient forces. The campaign in South Africa furnishes a notable example.

The configuration of the northern frontier of Natal is a salient towards the Orange River and Transvaal States. Dundee, a forward position towards the apex of the angle, was occupied mainly owing to political reasons, which were urgent and imperative enough. If Dundee had been abandoned, the hopes of disloyal colonists not only in Natal, but throughout Cape Colony, would have been encouraged, and the surrender of the town and neighbourhood would have been a direct incentive to many to join the Boer forces who might otherwise have kept aloof or remained neutral. The spirits of British subjects and other loyal colonists would have been correspondingly depressed; the retention of the coal fields at Dundee was a further inducement. But the determination to hold the exposed position at Glencoe was influenced by a factor far more important than all these considerations, which would never arise in European warfare, namely, that an entire withdrawal from the town might have led to "the rising of 750,000 of perhaps the most warlike and bloodthirsty natives in our Empire. Had it taken place, it would have been as great a disaster in a military sense as in a political."\*

Sir George White saw the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of holding and maintaining possession of the salient, and wisely confined himself to a concentration of his troops at Ladysmith, a position which had many points in its favour, for from this central position he (1) commanded the junction of the railways which, here bifurcating, led respectively to the Transvaal and the Free State, (2) might hope to prevent a union of the forces of the two Republics, (3) was in a position to strike at the flanks of any forces which might cross the Tugela River.

In spite of the initial negative tactical victory of Talana Hill, the British force, threatened by overwhelming numbers, was compelled to make a hasty retreat—abandoning all stores and

\* Sir George White. Evidence before the Royal Commission.

the wounded general to their adversaries—and but for the dilatoriness displayed by the Boers in following up the retreat, it is doubtful whether the Gleneoe garrison would ever have reached Ladysmith in safety, which, however, it eventually did, though completely exhausted from the difficulties and hardships of the march.

Ladysmith in its turn was surrounded and invested, and stood a siege lasting for several months.

The necessity of relieving Ladysmith by the reinforcements then arriving in Africa from England upset the whole initial strategy of the campaign.

The abandonment of the Portuguese frontier by Wellington in his campaign of 1810, and the retreat on the lines of Torres Vedras, are a happy instance of a general willingly and purposely not only abandoning a large area of territory, but methodically, and so far as lay in his power, exhausting that territory of all supplies which might be of benefit to his adversary, in the hope of recovering it under later and more favourable conditions. Wellington knew that the forces at his disposal for the defence of the Portuguese frontier were not sufficient, and were unequal successfully to stem the tide of Masséna's invasion at the head of far superior forces. Possessing the necessary determination and courage to carry out his plans, long before decided upon, he retreated, acting advisedly on the motto, "Il faut reculer pour mieux sauter." The complete success which eventually attended his strategy has already been pointed out. (See Chapter IX., Part II.)

## CHAPTER XIV.

### ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PREPARED FOR WAR.

Continuity of Policy a Strategic Factor of Great Importance—The Walcheren Expedition, 1809, and Other Instances of Unpreparedness—The First Sikh Campaign, 1845—Relief of Jellalabad, 1812—The Reconquest of the Sondan.

#### Continuity of Policy a Strategic Factor of Great Importance.

It is the duty of the political leaders of a nation to inform those responsible for the organisation of the army and its preparedness for war of the demands which are likely to be made on it, the requirements it must fulfil, and the objects and purposes for which it will be used. Possessed of this knowledge, and according to the means placed at their disposal, the military leaders have some foundation on which they may build the military edifice, and the army can then be more economically and efficiently organised for the task which it will have to undertake when hostilities commence. It is evident, however, that an army organised and prepared for a certain contingency may be unprepared if suddenly required to face other contingencies. Hence continuity of foreign—external—as well as internal policy becomes a military and a strategic factor of great importance, and one which is unfortunately altogether overlooked, or deemed of but little or no account. Under the party system of government continuity of policy is difficult of attainment, for one party may be succeeded by another holding entirely different views, and policy is, therefore, subject to change. But a policy once determined on by a nation should so far as is possible be both continuous and resolute. Vacillation on the part of the political leaders of a nation not only hampers efforts towards the proper and most suitable form of organisation for an army, but also, when a state of war is likely to arise, adversely affects the strategical plans of the military leaders. The difficulty of the solution of the problem of continuity of policy as regards Great Britain, with its vast and varied interests in all quarters of the globe, is admittedly very great, and the most that can be expected is to make the best of a bad situation. This difficulty in the case of foreign

Powers is much diminished, or is practically non-existent, for at most they have to be prepared for one, two, or perhaps three contingencies. Their military leaders consequently, with universal service to aid them, are in a position adequately to organise and maintain their armies, so that when one or other of these contingencies has to be faced, and hostilities commence, they start prepared for war. They thus by being *ready* have one strategic difficulty the less to overcome, and this is a strategic difficulty which British generals have had on many occasions in the past, and will, it is to be feared, on many occasions in the future have to contend against; and it is a difficulty, moreover, for which sufficient allowance is never made. The nation which commences warlike operations with its army organised, prepared and ready for war, is in a position to seize the initiative, thus gaining all the advantages to be derived therefrom: but the nation which starts on war with its army unsuitably organised and unready, has first to remedy these defects. It thus loses the power of seizing the initiative, and is thrown back on the defensive, having afterwards to fight for that advantage, which, but for its unreadiness, it might have had from the outset. Hence adequate preparation and readiness for war becomes a dominant factor in strategy.

#### WALCHEREN EXPEDITION. 1809.

In November, 1808, British ministers learned the resolution of the Cabinet of Vienna to declare war against Napoleon.

"England, undiscouraged by the disastrous issue of Sir John Moore's expedition, resolved not only to resume the contest with increased vigour in the Spanish Peninsula, but to aid the common cause by a powerful demonstration in the North of Europe.

"A variety of considerations recommended Antwerp as the grand point of attack. Its formidable strength and increasing importance as a great naval station and arsenal, its close proximity to the British shores, the anxiety which Napoleon had evinced for its extension, pointed it out as the quarter from which, more than any other, serious danger was to be apprehended."\*

The fortifications at the time were in a bad state of repair, and the garrison weak.

No fault can be found with the objective selected, but in "one vital point they (English ministers) still proved themselves novices in combination, uninstructed by the military experience even of sixteen years."

On the 9th April the Inn was crossed by the Austrians.

On the 21st April the Austrians were defeated at Eckmühl.

On the 22nd May was fought the battle of Aspern.

\* Alison, "History of Europe."

"It was not till the end of the latter month (May) that any serious preparations began to be made by ministers for an expedition to lighten the load which had for two months been pressing on the Austrian forces." \*

The expedition should have started simultaneously with the commencement of the campaign by the Austrians, when their forces crossed the River Inn on the 9th April.

"Every day and hour was precious, when the Scheldt was defenceless, and Napoleon defeated on the Danube (Aspern). But the inherent vice of procrastination still paralysed the British Councils." \*

The expedition did not eventually sail till the 28th of July, upwards of a week after Napoleon's victory at Wagram had been known in the British Islands.

"When the expedition, however, at the eleventh hour did sail it was on a scale worthy both of the mistress of the seas and of one of the greatest military powers in Europe. The armament, consisting of thirty-seven ships of the line, twenty-three frigates, thirty-three sloops, eighty-two gunboats, besides transports innumerable, and having on board 39,000 sabres and bayonets, equivalent to above 41,000 of all arms, with two-battering trains and all their stores complete, contained above 100,000 combatants, and was the largest and best equipped that ever put to sea in modern times. What might it not have accomplished if conducted with vigour and directed by skill! With a British force of little greater amount Wellington struck down the empire of France on the field of Waterloo." \*

"The command of the expedition was intrusted to Lord Chatham, who neither inherited the energy of his father, the great Earl of Chatham, nor shared the capacity of his immortal brother, William Pitt. A respectable veteran, not without merit in the routine of official duty at home, he was totally destitute of the activity and decision requisite in an enterprise in which success was to be won rather by rapidity of movement than deliberation of conduct. Destitute of experience, unknown to fame, of indolent habits, he owed his appointment to Court favour, which ministers were chiefly culpable for not resisting to the uttermost of their power." \*

The instructions given to Lord Chatham were precise—

"You are upon the receipt of these our instructions to repair with our said troops to the Scheldt, and carry into effect the following instructions in conjunction with the commander of the naval forces. This conjoint expedition has for its object the capture or destruction of the enemy's ships either building or afloat at Antwerp, or Flushing, or afloat in the Scheldt, the destruction of the arsenals and dockyards at Antwerp, Terneuze

\* Alison, *op. cit.*

and Flushing, the reduction of the island of Walcheren, and rendering the Scheldt, if possible, no longer navigable for ships of war."

On the 29th the expedition arrived off the coast of Holland.

On the 30th 20,000 men were disembarked on the island of Walcheren; Middleberg, its chief town, was taken, and the French troops were driven into Flushing.

At the same time a second division landed in Cadzand, expelled the enemy from the island, and opened the way for the passage of the fleet up the western or principal branch of the Scheldt.

The British fleet, under Sir Richard Strachan, with eighteen ships of the line, occupied both branches of the Scheldt.

Ter Veere, a fortress commanding the Veeregat, a narrow entrance leading into the channel which separated South Beveland, was taken with its garrison of 1,000 men. Goes, the capital of this island, opened its gates.

On the evening of August 2nd Sir John Hope, with 7,000 men, appeared before the gates of Bahtz. Such was the consternation produced by the sudden advance and formidable forces, both naval and military, of the invaders, that this important fort, situated at the point of separation of the east and west Scheldt, and the "key to both channels, was evacuated in the night by the garrison and occupied next morning by the British troops. The success of the expedition appeared certain: more than two-thirds of the distance to Antwerp had been got over in three days; both divisions of the Scheldt were full of British vessels; the British standards were only five leagues from that fortress, and in four days more 30,000 men might be assembled around its walls."

So far all had gone well, and French writers admit that Antwerp could have been carried to a certainty by a "*coup de main*."<sup>\*</sup> But at this moment Lord Chatham failed. He did not grasp the fact that the capture of Antwerp itself should now become his immediate objective. Antwerp once in his possession, he would be master of the situation. Instead of carrying out his instructions as received, he reversed them. In place of pushing on and seizing Antwerp and the forts of the river, which would have prevented the return of the [enemy's] fleet from Flushing, where it lay at the time, he lost precious hours . . . in reducing that seaport [Flushing], valueless as a post in advance, after the fleet had entered the Scheldt, incapable of defence after Antwerp had fallen, if required as a support in case of retreat."

Having adopted this unhappy resolution, Lord Chatham

\* Vide Alison (Vol. VIII., p. 188), who quotes in full from Pelet: "*Vie de Napoléon*," and Napoleon's own opinions.

prosecuted the subordinate object of reducing Flushing with great vigour and success.\*

The town surrendered on the 16th with 5,800 prisoners and 200 pieces of cannon. The total number of prisoners taken since the landing of the expedition exceeded 7,000.

The time lost in besieging Flushing proved fatal to the other objects of the expedition.

On the 12th the King of Holland arrived at Antwerp at the head of his guards and 5,000 troops of the line.

Between the 14th and 20th reinforcements from Flanders and Picardy arrived. The fleet was removed above the town. National guards garrisoned the fortress, which was also put into a state of repair.

"In the meanwhile 20,000 British troops remained inactive in South Beveland, almost within sight of the steeples of Antwerp, and so dilatory were the proceedings of the English general, that though Flushing surrendered on the 16th it was not till the 26th that he advanced the headquarters to Bahtz, a distance not exceeding thirty miles. By that time 30,000 of the enemy were assembled on the Scheldt; Bernadotte had arrived and taken command at Antwerp, and put the place in a respectable state of defence; the squadron (French) was in safety; ulterior success impossible." \*

A council of war, summoned by Lord Chatham, decided a further advance to be impossible.

The troops retired to the island of Walcheren. This island was of great importance in that it closed the Scheldt, and thereby rendered useless the vast naval preparations of the enemy in that river, and in addition by its occupation a large land force of the enemy would be retained at Antwerp.

Accordingly 15,000 men were left as a garrison on the island, while the remainder of the troops returned to England.

But the island was notoriously unhealthy. The death rate soon amounted to from 200 to 300 a week, and rendered a continued occupation impossible, and Walcheren was finally abandoned; 7,000 men had been lost in the enterprise, and the sick returned at various times amounted to 12,800.

#### *Remarks.*

Up to the date of despatch of the British army to South Africa the Walcheren expedition was the largest and best equipped expedition which ever left the shores of England. At first partially successful, it was in the final result a total and complete failure. That failure may be put down to three causes:—

1. Unreadiness of the army, and incomplete state of preparations at the moment most favourable for the start of the expedition.

\* Alison, *op. cit.*

2. Procrastination and delay in starting even after preparations were complete. (The army and navy were ready by the end of June, the expedition did not start till the end of July.)

3. Incapacity on the part of the general in command.

Forty-nine years afterwards (1854) another great expedition sailed from the shores of England for the Crimea, but the chief lessons of the Walcheren expedition appear to have been overlooked or completely lost sight of. England again was unready, stores and equipment were deficient, when they should have been on hand, and medical supplies were wanting.

And again, forty-five years later (South Africa, 1899), for the third time in the nineteenth century, the outbreak of hostilities found the British nation unprepared and unready for the campaign they were about to engage in. In spite of the repeated warnings and the urgent requests of its military expert advisers, as to the precautions which should be taken, and of the military needs and necessities of the situation, the British Cabinet refused, on account of political reasons and considerations, to make adequate provision for war. It is now a matter of history that, but for the prompt and timely aid rendered by India, and the weak strategy displayed by our adversaries, the opening operations of the campaign would have been far more disastrous than in fact they really were.

Alison thus remarks on the failure of the military authorities in England to despatch military stores in time to carry on the siege of San Sebastian. Applied for by Wellington at the end of June, the necessary materials did not arrive in the Peninsula till the 18th and 23rd August—"a delay which enabled the governor of the fortress to erect the formidable interior entrenchments which proved so fatal to the Allies in the second assault. They were found to be in profusion, indeed, when they did arrive, but it was too late; the enemy had turned to too good purpose the prolonged delay thus afforded him. Men could not be more zealous than the British Government were at this period of the contest, and none ever made such stupendous efforts to carry it on as they did in this year. But they were still insensible, notwithstanding all the disasters which neglect of it had formerly occasioned, to the value of time in war; and exhibited in their best combinations too much of the character of their Saxon ancestors, of whom Athelstane the Unready is the true representative. So frequently has this principle of the simplest combinations, and above all of the vital importance of time in war, on the part of Government marred the greatest efforts, or disconcerted the best-laid enterprises of the British nation, that it deserves the serious consideration of all those who have the direction of the studies of youth, whether some instruction on the subject should not form

*part of elementary education to all those at least who are likely from their station or prospects to be called to the supreme direction of affairs.”\**

It is refreshing to turn from England's frequent unreadiness and note India's preparedness for war.

The despatch of the Indian Contingent to Natal has already been mentioned. The rapid mobilisation and general readiness for active service on the sudden outbreak of the rising on the North-West Frontier, 1897, and the expeditious despatch of the China expeditionary force to join in the allied advance for the relief of Pekin, are examples of modern times. Going back to the middle of the nineteenth century, the readiness of the army, and the completeness of the preliminary preparations—so far as he was permitted to make them—which enabled Sir Hugh Gough to oppose the Sikhs (1845) the instant that warlike people should declare war by crossing the Sutlej, is another. As this campaign furnishes, in addition, an example of the opening strategical dispositions of an army being governed by political considerations, it is here quoted.

#### FIRST SIKH CAMPAIGN. (MAP X.)

##### *Political and Military Situation.*

After the murder of Hira Singh, the Rani Jindan was nominally the ruler of the Punjab, but practically the policy of the state was directed by the leaders of the army, who were the real masters. The feeling of the army was very strong against the English, and favourable to war.

The River Sutlej defined the limits of British territory and of the Punjab ruled by the Sikhs. The British outposts on that river were Ferozepore and Ludhiana. In support of these outposts was Umballa, and the nearest place from which reinforcements could be pushed up to Umballa was Meerut.

The numbers which the Sikhs could, and did, put into the field have been variously estimated, but, exclusive of irregulars, they had a regular army, trained and disciplined by French officers, of approximately 35,000 infantry, 15,000 cavalry, and 200 guns. The Sikh artillery was admirably served. Their infantry, like our own, were armed with the “Brown Bess;” the men were brave and known to possess fighting qualities of the first order.

It is evident that the Sikh army on the banks of the Sutlej were within striking distance of Ferozepore and Ludhiana, and that in spite of a recent increase in their garrisons, the forces at either place, even if supported in time by the troops from Umballa, were not strong enough to oppose any determined advance of the Sikh army.

\* Alison, “History of Europe.” Vol. X., chap. lxxvii., p. 270. (The italics are the present author's.)

Military prudence demanded a further increase in the strength of these garrisons, and the Commander-in-Chief in India, Sir Hugh Gough, had even gone so far as to order, in November, 3,000 men from Meerut to Umballa, which order was cancelled by the Governor-General, these troops returning to Meerut.

Political reasons against reinforcing the garrisons of Ferozepore and Ludhiana lay in the fact that to have massed troops on the Sutlej might reasonably have been taken by the Sikhs as a menace to their independence, and so have given them the excuse they needed to declare war.

As political reasons forbade any increase in the strength of the garrisons at Ferozepore and Ludhiana, it was obviously desirable and very necessary that the forces posted at these two places, as well as the supporting forces at Umballa, should be ready to act immediately the Sikhs decided for war. All necessary arrangements to meet any emergency were made by the military authorities, so far as lay in their power.

Eventually the Sikh Durbar determined on war against the English in the hope that, should the Sikh army be victorious, the credit would be placed to its account, while, on the contrary, should that army be defeated, its power would be lessened, and the hands of the Durbar strengthened.

#### *Disposal and strength of the British forces:—*

Ludhiana was 80 and Ferozepore 160 miles from Umballa. The strength of the respective garrisons 5,000 and 7,000 men.

At Umballa and from the hill stations in its neighbourhood could be concentrated 10,000 men.

Meerut, distant 130 miles from Umballa, with a garrison of 9,000 men, was too far off to render any immediate assistance.

#### *Movements.*

On the 11th December, 1845, the Sikh army crossed the Sutlej 12 miles from Ferozepore, and by that act declared war.

General Littler, a capable and resolute soldier, who was in command at Ferozepore, at once moved out and offered battle, which was declined.

On hearing of the passage of the Sutlej, Sir Hugh Gough, with the troops at Umballa, instantly set out for the purpose of reinforcing the garrison at Ferozepore, and moved—

*December 12th.*—16 miles to Rajpura.

*December 13th.*—18 miles to Sirhind.

*December 14th.*—British army organised into brigades and divisions.

*December 15th.*—26 miles to Lattala.

*December 16th.*—30 miles to Wadin, effecting a junction at Bassein with Sir Henry Hardinge and part of the Ludhiana garrison (11,000 men).

*December 17th.*—10 miles to Charak.

*December 18th.*—21 miles to Moodkee.

In the meantime, the Sikhs, having left part of their army to observe the garrison at Ferozepore, had despatched a force *via* Ferozeshah towards Umballa.

On this day, the 18th, the two armies came into contact at Moodkee. The Sikhs were driven back. The losses on both sides were severe.

*December 19th.*—It was ascertained that the main Sikh army, between 30,000 and 35,000 men, with 80 or 90 guns, were encamped at Ferozeshah, which is distant about 10 miles from Moodkee.

*December 21st.*—General Littler, having quietly slipped out of Ferozepore without the knowledge of that part of the Sikh army which was there posted to watch the garrison, joined forces with Sir Hugh Gough. The junction effected, the British army attacked the Sikhs in position at Ferozeshah.

The battle lasted throughout the afternoon and continued till far into the night. Next morning the Sikhs at Ferozeshah retired, but suddenly there emerged in the distance the advanced guard of a fresh Sikh army. This force was that part of the Sikh army which had been posted to observe Ferozepore, and which, under command of Tej Singh, had early in the morning of the 21st set out from Ferozepore to join hands with the Sikh army at Ferozeshah, under command of Lal Singh. The British army had run out of ammunition, the men were tired out from the severe fighting of the previous day and night, were exhausted from want of food and water, and numbed from the intense cold of the previous night. Consequently the outlook at the moment was not bright. Tej Singh commenced the action by opening fire with his artillery, but suddenly broke off the fight, and, ordering a retirement, himself galloped off to the Sutlej.

The Sikh army recrossed to the right bank of the river.

*December 27th.*—Sir Hugh Gough advanced to Arufkee, pushed a reconnaissance to the fords of Sobraon, and took up a position stretching from Ferozepore to Urreke.

With the retirement of the Sikh army to their own bank of the Sutlej ends the purpose for which this campaign is quoted, which is (1) to show the influence of political reasons on the strategy of a campaign, in so far as the strategy was affected by preparations to ward off an enemy's anticipated offensive; and (2) to demonstrate how the readiness of the military forces on the spot, to act immediately the expected stroke should fall, defeated the object of that stroke.

It will not, however, be without interest to give a brief outline of the campaign to its conclusion.

Early in January the Sikhs again recrossed to the left bank

of the Sutlej in the direction of Ludhiana, for the purpose of opposing any advance of British reinforcements which might be pushed up by that route to Ferozepore.

*January 17th.*—A force under Sir Harry Smith was despatched to Dharmkote, with the object of covering an expected convoy of guns, arms, ammunition, and treasure.

*January 18th.*—Dharmkote, which had been occupied by the Sikhs, surrendered.

Sir Harry Smith was directed to proceed to Ludhiana, now threatened by a Sikh army under Ranjur Singh.

*January 21st.*—Ranjur Singh having taken post at Badiwal, Sir Harry Smith was compelled to make a flank march to avoid battle, but Ranjur Singh, moving out with his cavalry, came up with the rearguard, and captured nearly all the English baggage. Sir Harry Smith reached Ludhiana that evening.

*January 23rd.*—A brigade, under General Wheeler, despatched by Sir Hugh Gough, after Sir H. Smith, to reinforce that officer, had reached Sidham *via* Dharmkote. The officer in command, learning that a Sikh force lay between him and Ludhiana, returned to Dharmkote, and marched *via* Jugraon, which he reached on the 24th.

On the other hand, Ranjur Singh, learning of the arrival of a British force at Sidham, and fearing he might be attacked simultaneously from that place and Ludhiana, evacuated his threatening position at Badiwal and fell back on Aliwal, close to the banks of the Sutlej.

*January 25th.*—Sir H. Smith to Badiwal, where he was joined by Wheeler.

*January 26th and 27th.*—Halt at Badiwal.

*January 28th.*—Sir H. Smith, with a strength of 10,000 men, engaged the Sikh army at Aliwal; that army, defeated in battle, retreated to the right bank of the Sutlej.

In the meantime, the Sikh army at Sobraon, having constructed a bridge head at the ford of Sobraon, and an entrenchment on the left bank, again recrossed from the right to the left bank of the river.

*February 7th and 8th.*—Reinforcements from Meerut arrived, and on the latter day the force which had fought at Aliwal also joined.

*February 10th.*—The Sikh army in position at Sobraon was attacked, and after fierce and determined fighting on both sides, was again driven back across the Sutlej.

The British army crossed to the right bank of the Sutlej, and on the 12th occupied the fort of Kasur, within 30 miles of Lahore. Here a treaty with the Sikh Durbar was entered upon, which brought the Sutlej campaign to a conclusion.

*February 20th.*—Lahore was occupied.

Thus, within two months of the invasion of British territory by an army belonging to a powerful, resourceful, and warlike nation, was the contest brought to a decisive conclusion; the enemy were driven back within their own borders and their capital was occupied. Within this period the British forces had engaged their antagonists in four pitched battles, Moodkee, Ferozeshah, Aliwal, and Sobraon, and had been victorious in all.

To what causes is to be attributed the success of the British arms?

First, undoubtedly, to the readiness of the forces to move the instant war was declared, by the act of the Sikh army crossing from their own, the right, to the left bank of the Sutlej. Secondly, the incompetency or, as declared by some authorities, the treachery of the Sikh leaders towards their men.

Sir Hugh Gough, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian army, though not permitted to increase the strength of the garrisons at the British outposts of Ferozepore and Ludhiana, situated far from the nearest point, Umballa, from which troops could be despatched to their assistance, made every possible preparation to stem the tide of invasion, the moment that invasion should commence by the passage of the Sikh army across the Sutlej. The instant this occurred the troops from Umballa were set in motion, and made that forward movement towards Ferozepore which ranks not least amongst the many wonderful and famous marches accomplished by British armies in India.

#### RELIEF OF JELLALABAD, APRIL, 1842.\* (MAP XI.)

During the last two months of the year 1841 the British forces in Kabul had been shut up in their cantonments outside the city walls. In January the garrison capitulated, and commenced the fatal and well-known retreat on Jellalabad, then garrisoned by a British brigade under command of General Sale. The Kabul force was massacred during its retreat; only one man succeeded in reaching Jellalabad.

Thus in January, 1842, Jellalabad remained our most advanced position in Afghanistan, on the line Peshawar, the Khyber, Jellalabad, Khurd Kabul, and Kabul. The nearest point on this line from which it was possible relief could be expected was Peshawar.

Between Peshawar and Jellalabad lay the formidable Khyber Pass.

At Peshawar was a garrison of four native regiments, under command of General Wild. At that time we were on outwardly friendly terms with the then powerful Sikh nation, and the Sikh auxiliaries at Peshawar were pledged to assist us. Wild had no artillery and no cavalry. Moreover, the men of the four

\* Authority : Kaye, "History of the War in Afghanistan."

regiments under his command "had for some time been exposed to the deteriorating contact of the mutinous Sikh soldiery, who had done their best to fill our sepoyes with that horror of the Khyber to which they (the Sikhs) had always abandoned themselves."\*

In spite of his deficiency in artillery, the low spirits at that time of the men under his command, and the fact that the Afridis, through whose territory the Khyber runs, had declared their intention to oppose the passage of his troops, Wild determined to advance to the relief of the British garrison in Jellalabad.

#### *First Attempt.*

*March 17th.*—Wild moved forward, and with two out of his four regiments, succeeded in occupying the fort of Ali Musjid, which lay in the pass five miles from its eastern entrance, and was always regarded as the key of the defile. Through some error, however, out of 350 supply bullocks which accompanied the regiments, only 50 or 60 reached the fort. The two regiments at Ali Musjid found themselves cut off from Peshawar, in an isolated position and with no supplies.

*March 19th.*—Wild, with the two remaining regiments, four guns of the Sikhs, and some auxiliaries of that nation, advanced towards the pass. The Sikh auxiliaries refused to advance. Wild attempted to force an entrance to the pass, but his men were repulsed.

The officer in command at Ali Musjid, his troops being without bedding, without tents, and wanting in supplies, determined to cut his way back to Jamrud and Peshawar.

*January 24th.*—He effected this movement, being assisted by a second forward movement by Wild from Jamrud. Thus the first attempt to relieve Jellalabad failed.

#### *Second Attempt.*

*February 5th.*—General Pollock, who had been placed in command of the forces detailed to relieve Jellalabad, reached Peshawar, his arrival being followed in a few days by a second brigade.

There were now in Peshawar two brigades, but Pollock discovered he was in no position to advance, for the following reasons:—

There were some 1,800 sick in hospital.

The preparations for the contemplated advance were in a backward state.

He was deficient still in both cavalry and artillery.

It was necessary either first to subjugate the Afridis, who guarded the pass, or buy their neutrality.

\* Kaye, *op. cit.*

The troops, contaminated by the Sikh auxiliaries and discouraged at the failure of the first attempt, were in low spirits and much disheartened.

Pollock, therefore, in spite of pressing calls from Sale at Jellalabad, determined to rectify these evils before attempting any forward movement for the relief of the garrison.

He visited the hospitals, saw to the wants of and got in close touch with his men, thus gaining their confidence. He demanded further reinforcements of English troops, especially cavalry and artillery.

Throughout February and March Pollock remained in Peshawar, organising the relieving army. During these months he received from Jellalabad repeated calls urging him to advance, but the British general was determined to make no move till all was ready.

Sale had stated he could hold on in Jellalabad up to the 31st March.

Pollock was in hopes that the further reinforcements demanded by him would reach Peshawar on the 20th March. They did not arrive till the 27th of that month.

*March 31st.*—Pollock pitched his camp at Jamrud, situated a few miles from the entrance of the Khyber.

*April 5th.*—Pollock, now assisted by the Sikh auxiliaries, advanced on the pass, forced an entrance, and arrived at Ali Musjid after severe resistance, but with little loss of life, and no loss of baggage.

The Sikh auxiliaries agreed to keep open communications by the pass.

Pollock continued his advance on Jellalabad, and succeeded in relieving the garrison, who, in the meanwhile, on the 1st April, had sallied forth and inflicted a crushing blow on the Afghans under Akbar Khan.

#### *Remarks.*

Pollock had sufficient firmness of purpose, under great temptation, to resist Sale's pressing appeals for an immediate advance, until such time as he was fully prepared and ready to undertake the task which lay before him. He determined to make sure of his ground, and to engage in no hasty operations entailing the risk of a reverse.

The British general knew full well that the consequences of a defeat in the Khyber, and a second failure to relieve Jellalabad (especially after the recent disastrous retreat from Kabul) would lead to most serious results, possibly threatening our very position in India.

Pollock's preparations were adequate to the object in view. When his preparations were complete—when he was ready to make a forward movement—he did so, and not till then.

Coming to more recent times, Lord Kitchener's advance for the capture of Khartoum and the reconquest of the Soudan is another conspicuous example of a leader, foreseeing a campaign to be unavoidable, quietly and without ostentation making ready for the inevitable; collecting the necessary warlike material, training, organising, and disciplining the troops for the work which lay before them, and sparing no pains to ensure that the preparations were adequate to the end in view. Then, when all was ready and complete, launching that forward movement through an exceptionally inhospitable country — another example of famous desert marches, which, once commenced, continued without any hitch or interruption till, helped to a favourable issue by the preliminary engagement on the banks of the Atbara, it was brought to a successful termination by the decisive victory at Omdurman, and Egypt's flag once again, and under better conditions, was hoisted on the walls of Khartoum.

The Soudan campaign has been quoted, and deservedly so, as an economical campaign. It was economical because it was adequately prepared for. It is the misplaced economy of statesmen in refusing to prepare for possible campaigns which causes those campaigns, when in the end they have to be undertaken, to be so ruinously expensive. It is better economy and sounder finance to risk the money necessary for the preliminary preparations of a possible campaign than at the last moment, and possibly when it is already too late, to be forced into purchasing the means of war at contractors' own prices.

## CHAPTER XV.

### STRATEGY AS AFFECTED BY POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The Plan of a Campaign must Sometimes be Guided by Political Considerations—Instances of the Evil Consequences of Political Interference: Marlborough's Operations in the Low Countries—Sir Colin Campbell's Intended Invasion of Rohilkund—Inadequate Military Preparations for the Boer War.

#### **Instances of the Evil Consequences of Political Interference.**

SINCE war is a political action of the first order, it is but right and proper that, under certain conditions, initial strategic conception, and sometimes the subsequent plan of operations, should be guided by—or, at any rate, not be in conflict with—the political ends in view; and when the strategy, both of the moment and of the future, is really due to sound reasons of external or foreign policy the fact must be deferred to and accepted. As a case in point, it has already been shown how in the first Sikh war (1845) a forward position on the banks of the Sutlej would probably have been the best plan, but that that position was not taken up for the political reason that the very fact of a forward movement and of a concentration on the banks of the river might have raised apprehensions in the minds of the Sikh nation that an invasion of the Punjab was contemplated, and might therefore have forced on the struggle which it was desired to prevent. Hence the concentration of the army took place, not on the banks of the Sutlej but at Lahore; and this laid open to invasion that part of the Punjab then under the protection and suzerainty of the Indian Government. Consequently it was a political consideration which decided the initial strategy of the campaign.

The strategic conception of a campaign with reference to the political and military situation having been once determined upon, the politician should give way to the soldier, who should be allowed a free hand to carry out by force what diplomacy has failed to effect by peaceful means. To hamper and fetter the strategy of the general in the field by orders and counter orders from home is always fatal, and the history of the British as well as of other armies furnishes numerous examples of the evil consequences of political inter-

ference in the conduct of a campaign. For specific instances the reader cannot do better than peruse Fortescue's "History of the British Army," the third volume of which covers the period 1763-1793. Therein he will see for himself how, during that period, the instructions issued by the officials responsible for the government of Madras thwarted the plans of the generals commanding in the field, and generally worked for evil; and how the orders and counter-orders issued from England interfered with the projects and plans of Cornwallis and Clinton in the American War of Independence.

Marlborough's operations in the Low Countries especially illustrate the difficulties a general has to contend against if his plans be frustrated by political interests and motives.

In the year 1702 England, Holland, and Austria declared war against France. Apart from English interests, "the anxiety of the Dutch was for the maintenance of their frontier and for an augmentation of their territory; the desire of the Austrian Emperor was to ensure his son's rule over Spain."\* "The King of Prussia was much disturbed over his territory of Cleve, and all parties who had not interests of their own to put forward made it their business to thwart the commander-in-chief."† "To secure concerted action by these different powers taxed all the diplomacy of Marlborough, but he succeeded for the most part in his desires."†

In 1703 Marlborough had the same difficulties to contend against, and in 1704 his celebrated march to the Danube was commenced and accomplished only by first deceiving both the British Ministers and the States-General as to his real objective.

We next quote an example of a commander waiving his own idea of the plan of operations to be pursued in favour of that proposed by the political leaders of the country:—

"Sir Colin Campbell intended following up the capture of Futtyghur by the invasion of Rohileund, and destruction of the rebel power at Bareilly, which could be effected before the hot weather came on. He then meant to put his army into quarters in the recovered provinces for the hot and rainy months, distributing them so as to hem the Oude forces into their own territory. These months were to be employed in the complete restoration of our authority in the old provinces, in reinstating everywhere our civil government, and treading out the ashes of rebellion. The Madras and Bombay columns to do the same in Central India, and up to the banks of the Jumna. When cool weather came on a great concentric movement was to take place upon Lucknow; the rebels were to be driven from the circumference to the centre of the circle, the rebellion hemmed

\* "Encyclopaedia Britannica." Vol. XV.

† Fortescue, "History of the British Army."

in on all sides, and crushed in the heart of Oude. The political views of the Governor-General were, however, greatly averse to this able plan. He considered the immediate reduction of Lucknow as the primary object, trusting to the moral effect of a great blow there. Sir Colin Campbell gave in to superior authority and reduced Lucknow, but, as he had predicted, a wasting guerilla warfare ensued, which would have been avoided in a great measure by following his own former plan of operations.\*

Whether the "wasting guerilla warfare" would have been shortened or avoided altogether, had Sir Colin Campbell's scheme been followed, must for ever remain a matter of conjecture. The case is merely quoted as an instance of a scheme of operations forced by those in political power upon a general with different views as to the plan of operations which should be adopted.

But, granted that reasons of foreign policy must be permitted to influence the strategical conception of a proposed campaign, no words can describe too strongly the mischievous and often disastrous effects of permitting the internal politics of a country to interfere in any way with legitimate and ordinary precautions for a war which may take place, or with its conduct when in actual progress. The refusal to provide the necessary funds to complete, or even to commence, the most ordinary preparations for a possible war is frequently due to questions, not of external, but of internal policy; and that this should be so is essentially unstatesmanlike. When diplomacy fails, and the sword has to be drawn, readiness to face the adversary is a logical sequence of political action. It is of no use entering into diplomatic negotiations if the army be unprepared to enforce the demands of diplomacy, should they not be conceded; it is false economy not to set the military house in order in case force has after all to be resorted to; and it is a mistake to assume that obvious measures of precaution will frustrate the efforts of diplomacy and precipitate that which both parties to the negotiations are probably anxious to avoid. The generals into whose hands is entrusted the leading of the military forces of a nation must be provided with means adequate to the occasion, and these means must be available and ready for instant use on the outbreak of hostilities. If not, then the military leaders have to reconcile what they would like to do with what they can do; but to compensate for the initial fault of unreadiness for war is a task which it will tax the highest military genius to accomplish. National unreadiness for war is *not* a military but a *political* vice, and one for which there is the least possible excuse.

\* Ensign Fred. Adams, "Jomini's Strategy." Translator's notes.

The inadequate military preparations made for the Boer War were no doubt due to a great extent to foreign policy. The desire of the Cabinet was to avoid taking any steps which might have appeared to the inhabitants of the two republics to indicate a desire for war or a wish to force on a struggle; but to the observer not behind the scenes it would seem that this reluctance to commence necessary preparations for war was strengthened by the apprehensions of the party in power that such a course of action might be turned to political advantage by the party not in power. If this be so, then the actions of the Cabinet were influenced by motives of internal as well as external policy. And it is this mischievous interference of internal politics in the military considerations of a possible campaign that is to be so strongly deprecated, and that leads, as military history has so frequently proved, to such disastrous results.

To increase in any way the difficulties of the political and military leaders of the nation while the country is at war, and while its soldiers are risking their lives in guarding the honour and interests of their native land, is a course of action which it is impossible on any grounds to defend. If the nation be at war, whether that war be just or unjust, to bring it to a speedy and honourable conclusion is the first consideration; but that result will not be achieved by speeches which, even if the motives which actuate their authors be honest, can only, when war is actually in progress, be stigmatised as unpatriotic, if not worse.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### INFLUENCE ON STRATEGY OF NEUTRAL, FRIENDLY, OR HOSTILE POWERS.

Alliances of Historic Importance to Great Britain—Influence of a Neutral Frontier on Belligerent Operations—Wars that have been Affected by the Interference of Other Powers—Basutoland and the Boer War.

THE neutrality, friendliness, or enmity of foreign powers, when war is contemplated, is a matter which affects the Cabinet, and is dealt with and arranged by it. But the military advisers of a government should, of course, be kept acquainted with circumstances which are likely to interfere in any way with possible military operations.

The alliances of the greatest historical importance as regards Great Britain are :—

1. The Triple Alliance, 1688. Great Britain, Sweden, and the Netherlands against France.
2. The Grand Alliance, 1689. Emperor Leopold I. and Holland, subsequently joined by England, Spain and Saxony, against Louis XIV.
3. The Quadruple Alliance, 1718. Great Britain, France, Austria, and Holland against Spain.
4. Alliance of 1854. Great Britain, France and Turkey against Russia.\*

The rules of International Law, which are accepted as binding by all civilised Powers, may very shortly be summarised as follows :—

“A state which is neutral is entitled to prohibit all belligerent operations within its territory. . . . It may prevent the passage of armies through those portions of land over which its jurisdiction extends. . . . It is, in fact, as much the duty as the right of the neutral state to insist on these prohibitions, as the omission to do so in any case might give an advantage to one belligerent over the other inconsistent with true neutrality. . . . Further, the obligation of impartiality extends to prohibiting the use of the neutral territory for the purpose of fitting out warlike expeditions.”†

\* “Encyclopædia Britannica,” Vol. I., p. 584.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII., p. 198.

If the rules of International Law be obeyed by two belligerents, then, apart from other considerations, a neutral state whose territories may be adjacent to the theatre of operations of two opposing armies will affect the strategy of each, inasmuch as its frontier will confine and limit the movements of either or both armies which may be manoeuvring in its vicinity.

The influence of a neutral frontier will, of course, be one of degree, depending (1) upon the proximity of the frontier line to the theatre of operations, and (2) upon the configuration of that frontier, whether straight, projecting into, or retreating from the immediate sphere of operations.

If one general can so manoeuvre as to throw his opponent back on to the frontier of a neutral state, his adversary must either fight a battle to escape the toils, or retreat into neutral territory, where, if the custom of war sanctioned and recognised by International Law is followed, he must surrender.

The frontier of a neutral state which projects into the immediate sphere of operations of two belligerents often interferes with or entirely prevents a strategic movement which, if it could only be carried out, might produce most decisive results. Thus any movement from Delagoa Bay to Pretoria was precluded in the war in South Africa, as the bay was in the territory of a neutral state—Portugal. Hence the force under Sir Charles Warren, in the turning movement made by that officer, had to take a more circuitous and unsuitable route, starting from Beira as its base.

The Kohat-Peshawar road running through the friendly territory of the Adam-Khehl Afridis in the Tirah campaign proved of great use, as by it the concentration of troops on their return to Peshawar from the Mohmand and Maimund expeditions was much facilitated. When Sir Charles Napier used this very road in 1850, he was opposed, and had to fight his way through.

The "family compact," knowledge of which came to the ears of the elder Pitt, affected the progress of his campaigns of the Seven Years' War, and led to the despatch of fleets which took Havannah and Manilla (1760).

It was the interference of France and Spain and of the armed neutrality which caused Britain to abandon her operations in America, in the War of Independence. The war in North America continued for many years with varying fortune. But once France actively intervened and was joined by Spain and Holland, the whole conditions of the campaign were altered. The British Navy was no longer dominant in the Atlantic. Command of the sea became insecure. Warlike stores and reinforcements ceased to reach America with certainty, and as a consequence thereof the American colonies achieved their independence.

During the war in the Spanish Peninsula, 1812-14, the

United States declared war against Great Britain. Napier complains that the British Navy neglected Wellington in consequence. A considerable number of our troops, inured to and experienced in war, were sent from the South of France to America who would otherwise have been available for Waterloo.

In 1801 the Czar and Denmark joined an armed neutrality which brought Nelson to the Baltic, and it was the friendliness of the Sultan of Turkey to the French in 1807 that occasioned the failure of Duckworth in the Dardanelles and of Fraser in Egypt, both humiliating incidents.

For a more recent example of the influence of a neutral state upon the strategy of a campaign, it is only necessary to refer to the case of Basutoland in the South African war.

With respect to our own operations, Basutoland was a strategic obstacle in that it completely separated the forces operating from Natal and Cape Colony; a strategic aid in that it protected the adjacent borders of Cape Colony and Natal. The district also served as a centre of information, for here news as to Boer movements was collected, and from hence it was disseminated to our own headquarters and the various columns.

From the point of view of the Boer strategy, the neutrality of Basutoland afforded a sure protection to one part of their flank, and prevented some 20,000 to 30,000 good fighting men from taking an active part in the campaign, a circumstance which liberated for other operations a large force of Boers, who must otherwise have been occupied in watching and safeguarding their territories from a Basuto raid.

Whatever may have been the ultimate disadvantages of employing the Basuto levies—irregular and undisciplined troops, but of undoubtedly courage—the immediate addition of a mobile force of 10,000 to 20,000 of these men, who could practically have lived upon the country, and would have needed little or no supplies beyond those of arms and ammunition, must have produced a very decisive effect.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### **QUALITIES OF MILITARY LEADERS SUPERIOR AND SUBORDINATE.**

How British Military Leaders have Risen to the Occasion—An Example from the Year 1781—Unity of Command: Examples from Wellington's and Marlborough's Campaigns.

NAPOLEON said, "The commander-in-chief is the head; he is everything to an army. It was not the Roman army which conquered Gaul, but Cæsar. It was not the Carthaginian army which made Rome tremble at her gates, but Hannibal. It was not the Macedonian army which marched to the Indus, but Alexander. It was not the Prussian army which defended Prussia for seven years against the three most powerful states of Europe, but Frederick."

#### **British Military Leaders.**

Fortunately, the leaders of Britain's military forces have seldom failed the armies they lead and the Empire they serve. The history of the Indian Empire alone is a record of heroic deeds and brilliant leading by soldiers whose names in many cases are now completely forgotten; and yet it is these men who have built up and maintained that Empire which has been described as "the brightest jewel in England's crown." It is to the officers of the British Empire, and the talents they have shown in leading the heterogeneous forces under their command, that the greatness and might of the nation, as it now exists, are chiefly due. This is all the more to be wondered at, and is a greater tribute to their merits as leaders, when it is remembered that many of their best achievements have been brought to a successful conclusion in spite of interference and active opposition on the part of the nation's political leaders, while the reward of their labours has in many instances been official neglect.

Fortescue in an eloquent passage relates the records of one year only—1781; a year when the British Empire was engaged in a deadly contest in no fewer than three continents at the same

time—Europe, America and Asia; a year in which catastrophe in each particular sphere of operations was only averted owing to the superior qualities of leadership exhibited by the men in command of her hard-pressed forces.

"So closed the operations of 1781; and it is worth while to think for a moment of the great array of British officers who were standing at bay against heavy odds during that terrible year—of Clinton fencing with Washington at New York; of Cornwallis, misguided indeed but undismayed, fighting his desperate action at Guildford; of Rawdon contriving to stem the tide of invasion for a few days so as to save his garrisons; of Campbell, helpless and deserted in his sickly post at Pensacola; of the commanders in the West Indies set down in the midst of treacherous populations and of a deadly climate; of Murray still defiant at Minorca; of Elliot proudly disdainful of perpetual bombardment at Gibraltar; of Goddard trying desperately, but in vain, to fight his way to Poonah; of Popham snatching away Gwalior by surprise; of Carnac plucking himself by sheer daring from the midst of Scindiah's squadrons; of Flint making mortars of wood and grenades of fuller's-earth at Wandewash; of Lang, indomitable among his starving sepoyys at Vellone; lastly, of Coote, shaken by age and disease, and haunted at every step by the spectre of famine—marching, manœuvring, fighting unceasingly to relieve his beleaguered comrades. With such men to defend it the Empire was not lost."\*

That the strategy of a campaign is dependent upon the ability of the officer selected to the active command of the army is obvious. Provided the right selection in this respect has been made, it is evident that the various movements and combinations which form the whole strategic plan in contemplation are dependent also upon the capabilities of the subordinate commanders—the generals of divisions and brigades—in efficiently carrying out their respective duties; in a lesser degree, but still contributing to the general result, these latter commanders must rely upon their respective staff and regimental commanders. In fact, the chain of responsibility and of efficiency, commencing with the highest in rank, the commander-in-chief, runs through all grades till the lowest, the private—the simple soldier—is reached. Hence the importance of a high standard of intelligence and education, both military and general, in each fighting unit of the various component parts of an army.

The history of any campaign will prove the truth of what is now stated. In some instances it will be observed that the action of subordinate commanders, equalling and perhaps rising superior to their responsibilities, has materially contributed to its ultimate success; while on the other hand, want of ability or

\* "History of the British Army."

neglect on their part to carry out the particular duties entrusted to them has resulted in a partial or entire failure of the whole strategic scheme.

An example of the far-reaching consequences and untoward results which ensue when the commander is unequal to the duties of his position is the Walcheren expedition, already described. That expedition, up to the date of its despatch, was the largest and best equipped force which had ever left the shores of Britain. It was at the same time one of the most disastrous, and ended in complete failure—a failure due for the most part to lack of military knowledge and skill in the leaders to whom the command of the expedition was entrusted.

The difficulty of making the right selection both of the officer who is to command in chief and of the higher subordinate commanders is often very great. Claims of seniority cannot in justice be passed over, especially when previous service leads to and warrants the choice. But officers who, as organisers and as administrators, have shown merits of the highest order often fail when placed in active command; and again, men who in subordinate commands cannot be surpassed not seldom prove wanting when greater responsibilities have to be accepted.

War is the only test as to fitness for command in the field, and it is the test which is the most difficult, and often after a long period of peace impossible, to apply. An army which takes the field with tried and proved leaders in command, especially if their experience of war be recent, will be far more likely to prove equal to the task demanded of it than if the leaders be untried and inexperienced.

#### Unity of Command.

Unity in command seems a simple thing to attain, but is often the reverse, especially when British armies are allied—as they so often are—with those of another Power.

Wellington, after the victory of Vimiera (1808), desired to advance upon Lisbon and to cut off Junot from a retreat upon the Portuguese capital. But Sir Harry Burrard took over the chief command after the battle and decided against an advance.

The differences between Wellington and Cuesta in the Talavera campaign (p. 118) have already been alluded to.

Wellington on several occasions, depending upon the active and loyal co-operation of the Spanish commanders, which frequently failed him, was compelled to retreat. Hence, the British general resolved, though fighting for the Spaniards, not to rely upon them, and consequently his plans, after his unfortunate experiences, were drawn up on the hypothesis that perchance the Spanish promises would fail him, as in fact they often did.

In the Blenheim campaign as well as in some of the campaigns of Flanders, Marlborough and Eugène divided the command of the Allies between them. These campaigns were on the whole successful, that of Blenheim especially so, but they must be regarded as exceptions, and their success is chiefly attributable to Marlborough's personal qualities. Few men have ever combined in themselves the charm of manner, the singular tact, the great skill in the handling of men and in reconciling conflicting interests, for which Marlborough was noted, and which carried him through his many difficulties. Yet the disadvantages of division of command can be seen in the hard-fought battle of Malplaquet, 1709.

"The more closely the battle is studied the more the conviction grows that no action of Marlborough's was fought less in accordance with his own plans. We have seen that he would have preferred to fight it on either of the two preceding days, and that he deferred to Eugène against his own judgment in suffering it to be postponed. Then again, there was the almost criminal folly of the Prince of Orange, which upset all preconcerted arrangements, threw away thousands of lives to no purpose, and not only permitted the French to retreat unharmed at the close of the day, but seriously imperilled the success of the action at its beginning." \*

The influence on strategy of politics, of neutrality, of the capabilities of superior and subordinate commanders, has now been shortly outlined, and it will be noted how each and all of these factors are strategic factors, which influence in no small degree every operation of war.

\* Hon. J. W. Fortescue, "History of the British Army."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### MODIFICATIONS OF STRATEGY DUE TO STEAM AND THE TELEGRAPH.

Preliminary Remarks—Effect of Railways in Enabling Armies to Remain Concentrated—Mountain and Desert Railways—Examples of Rapidity of Communication—Disadvantages of Railways as a means of Transport—The Telegraph: Its Effects upon Strategy—Campaigns before and since the Introduction of Steam and Telegraphy.

#### Preliminary Remarks.

THE inventions of recent years have caused great changes in armaments, and consequently in tactics. But strategy itself is independent of the actual armament and of the particular organisation of armies; it is influenced rather by geographical features, such as mountains and rivers, by the general direction of these over the theatre of operations, by the main avenues of approach to and from well-recognised strategic points and areas, and to a certain extent by climatic conditions. These factors generally may be said to remain unaltered, and consequently the general principles of strategic manœuvre remain unchanged. But certain new considerations have undoubtedly had a modifying effect on the strategy of modern as compared with that of ancient times. Of these considerations, the three most important are:—

1. "Conscription," or "universal service," which in the great wars of the present day increases the numbers of forces which may and can be put into line of battle.

2. "Steam," which includes (1) railways, by which the active employment of the increased numbers above noted is rendered possible, and by means of which the maintenance of these large armies in the field, with adequate supplies of food and all warlike stores, is mainly carried out; and (2) steamers, an invention which especially concerns British armies, since they reduce the difficulties and delays of transport of troops across the ocean.

3. The telegraph, which facilitates the despatch and receipt of every kind of information at headquarters from and to the four quarters of the globe. Consequently the uncertainty that

formerly prevailed as to the movements of one's own and the enemy's forces is now much diminished.

With the first of these three considerations, namely, the increased number of forces which it is now possible to place in line of battle, this chapter is not concerned, but a few words regarding the introduction of steam and the telegraph as military factors are necessary.

### Railways.

Up to the close of the eighteenth century armies as a rule went into winter quarters, owing partly to the hardships suffered by the troops and the losses caused by men manœuvring and bivouacking under such unfavourable conditions, and partly to the condition of the roads, which in winter were adversely affected to such an extent that all movements became frequently impossible; and even if they were possible, and the troops could march, the transport which carried the supplies could not keep up with them. But snow, frost, and rain do not affect in any appreciable degree railway tracks, and since the invention of the railway it has not been usual to suspend the operations of a campaign merely on account of unfavourable climatic conditions.

Armies in former times, unless they were kept constantly on the move, and scattered, so as to exist on the new countries they overran, could not always be supplied by roads alone, and when these armies concentrated for battle their maintenance for any length of time was a matter of extreme difficulty. But armies of modern times—even the largest—can be kept concentrated, and can be maintained even in the worst climate and under the most unfavourable conditions, by supplies brought from the base or bases from which they operate, and on which they depend, by means of the rail. It is reckoned that one train *per diem* will supply a modern Army Corps, the strength of which varies from 35,000 to 45,000 men.

But the value of railways with reference to the movements of troops, not of supplies, is one of degree, and cannot be passed over without some further reference to the subject.

If, for instance, it be desired to move a force of a few hundred men a distance of twenty miles, the value of a line of rail is obvious, granting that the necessary rolling stock is at hand, and that entraining and disentraining platforms have been previously prepared. The railway will transport the troops more quickly than they can march. The entraining and disentraining of troops, however, is an operation of such slowness that if the number of men be increased from a few hundred to thousands to move the same distance, the advantage of the rail with respect to movement only is not so apparent. Such a force could arrive

at its destination by road more quickly than it could be railled there, and certainly this would be so if two or more parallel roads led to that destination. But, if the distance be increased, the balance again inclines in favour of the rail. For instance, to move a force, however large or small, from, say, Cairo to Khartoum, or from the seaports of South Africa to Pretoria, or from the interior of India to its frontier, a movement by rail would be a quicker method than by route march, with the further advantage that the men would arrive at their destination fresh and with their equipment in good order, and not, as they otherwise would, fatigued from daily marches, with the soles of their boots worn out, and with kit and equipment damaged.

Since railways as a rule run along the greater valleys, the main lines, both of offence and defence, will still follow those along which armies of former times have moved. But where railways traverse mountain ranges, or cross rivers hitherto unbridged, modifications in the strategical lines of manœuvres possible in any given theatre of war are at once introduced. Railway bridges can be thrown by modern engineers over defiles which were for ages insuperable obstacles to the passage of armies. The great bridges which connect our Indian system of railways are evidences of the skill of the engineer. The importance of these bridges in all strategic plans of to-day, as well as of the future, cannot be overestimated. The value of the Canadian Pacific Railway, linking the Atlantic with the Pacific Oceans, in connection with the strategic defence of the Empire, is obvious.\* A bridged river, and a mountain barrier crossed by a metalled road, or railway, or both, present, of course, very different obstacles now as compared with the period prior to the construction of these aids. But a bridge may be destroyed, and the tunnels of a railway crossing a mountain barrier may be blown in, in which case the obstruction presented by a natural obstacle to the march of armies will differ but little in modern as compared with ancient times.

The difficulties offered by a desert to the movements of troops are much diminished if the inhospitable district over which an army must otherwise march be crossed by railways. And a railway across a desert is peculiarly safe as regards raids or strokes at a line of communications, for the desert itself is a hindrance to such operations. Lord Kitchener's operations in the advance on Khartoum were much facilitated by the construction of a railway across the desert.

The value of a railway line of communications in all strategic manœuvres being so great, a study of its employment and management in war by a staff of specially trained men has

\* *Vide "The 'New Pacific' from a Strategic Point of View," by Dr. Maguire, in the Journal of the Royal United Service Institution. June, 1904.*

become a necessity. The mobilisation and concentration of troops, the despatch of warlike stores, of food supplies, and of reinforcements; the carrying away to base hospitals, from the immediate sphere of operations, where they are only a hindrance, of the sick and wounded have become the work of the specialist. The movement of troops alone by rail is an art of itself, which can only be mastered by practice. The wrong despatch of a single train may be the cause of an accident, or a block, which may immediately interfere with strategical and tactical plans, and thus have far-reaching consequences.

In the chapter dealing with "Strokes at an Enemy's Line of Communications," the value of rapid communications direct and lateral was touched upon. Here railways are of great use. By their means a force concentrated in some central position can be kept in reserve until the development of the enemy's real design is ascertained, when it can be rapidly moved towards the threatened point.

In the Crimean War the want of railways prevented Russia from concentrating her troops to oppose the disembarkation of the Allies on the coast. The need of railways, by which Russia could have despatched forces after the siege commenced, and by means of which she could have maintained the forces so despatched, was sadly felt by that Power.

The following few examples illustrate the rapidity of movement of modern times compared with the days previous to the invention of steam:—

"Wellesley's expedition sailed from Cork July 12th, 1808, and commenced to disembark at Figueras Bay, only 900 miles distant, on August 1st. The weather was favourable, but the landing of 4,000 men was not completed till August 5th. The whole operation, both of movement and disembarkation, could now be completed in the time it took Wellington's army to disembark. The average tonnage of a transport then was about 500 tons. The average tonnage of a transport of to-day exceeds 500 tons by ten times.

"In the Boer War the *Kildonan Castle* left Southampton January 3rd and arrived at Cape Town January 20th, with eighty-nine officers and 2,607 men. The *Goth* left Gibraltar August 23rd and reached Natal September 20th—this voyage would have taken seventy-five days at least in 1808. The *Sardinian* left Quebec October 30th and reached Cape Town November 30th. And the *Media* left Albany November 5th and disembarked troops and horses from South Australia, West Australia, and Tasmania, at Cape Town, November 26th.

"To send an army to the Peninsula in 1808 and to keep it up to a 40,000-men standard was probably a much more arduous task than was the despatch of 250,000 men to South Africa in

the Boer War. It was easier to get stores from the ports of disembarkation to Bloemfontein or Pretoria than it was to supply Wellington in 1812 during his march to Salamanca and on to Burgos."\*

"In the Crimean War a steamer leaving Southampton for Balaclava started November 24th and arrived at its destination December 16th. A steamer could now get to Hong Kong in the same length of time."\*

It is now much easier to build a metal bridge out of materials brought from Europe or America between the Upper Cataracts of the Nile, or far away at the Gokteik gorge on the north-east frontier of Burmah, than it was for Wellington's left wing to traverse the country between the Mondego and the Esla in his campaign of 1813.\*

The disadvantage of railways as a means of transport, both of troops and supplies, lies in the fact that they can be so easily destroyed and made useless. A few men, who know their business, can, with the proper equipment, in a very short time wreck a railway bridge over a river, thus stopping all traffic until the bridge be repaired and put in proper working order. Hence railway lines, especially when they traverse an enemy's country, or a district the inhabitants of which are inimical to the operations in hand, require the detailing of great numbers of men for their protection and security. They are peculiarly liable to all operations of the nature of "raids." The South African campaign teems with examples illustrating the truth of this statement. The constant raids against the British lines of communications will occur to the memory of, and be familiar to, all. The strategy of that campaign, after the first two phases of the war, was one intimately connected with the protection of the railway lines of communication. This has already been noted in the chapter dealing with "Strokes against an Enemy's Line of Communications."

"If any attempt is made to establish a rule by which to determine the force required to guard an intended line of railroad communication in a hostile country, the exceptions will be more numerous than the cases to which the rule will be applicable. If any army advances, leaving any considerable force of the enemy in the rear, it will be simply impossible to secure efficient protection to communications; for, however numerous may be the force detailed for protection, it will always be possible for an enemy to concentrate a superior force upon a given point, and effect a temporary break. The reliance in such cases must be on the rapidity of construction . . . The greatest trouble was caused by small cavalry parties, and by guerillas

\* Dr. Maguire.

who were constantly placing obstructions on the track, switching out rails as trains approached by wires running into bushes, and burning bridges. We lost some valuable lives in this way. Rebel sympathisers, who appeared as peaceable farmers by day, would be guerillas at night.”\*

The experience of the South African war proves the truth of the above remarks. Our armies had to contend with the trouble and inconvenience of obstructions to the line caused by raiding parties and “guerilla” operations. They had to reckon with the “rebel sympathisers, who appear as peaceable farmers by day and are guerillas at night.” And it was abundantly proved that where there is a long line of railway, which is liable to be raided and destroyed at any moment and at any place, greater reliance must be placed upon rapidity of reconstruction than upon the forces detailed for its protection.

### The Telegraph.

It is evident that the disadvantages of conducting offensive and defensive operations on an extended front, and at a distance from the headquarters of an army, have been diminished since the introduction of telegraphy as an aid to war. Let the reader imagine for himself the difference which the use of the telegraph would have made in former Indian campaigns when our forces were operating over vast territories; and when it took days, and even weeks, to transmit news as to the actual situation, and the progress of affairs at the front, and to receive instructions as to the intentions of government, and let him compare the situation with that of 1897, when the insurrection along the North-West Frontier suddenly broke out. The sudden attack on the Malakund position was at once known to army headquarters, and immediate steps were taken to despatch reinforcements for the relief of the garrison. During the later phases of these frontier operations, the exact position of the forces in the Hangu Valley, the situation in the Peshawar Valley, the movements and progress of troops operating in the Mohmand and Mamund Valleys, were hourly known at Simla, and the commanders of the various forces were each kept informed of the movements of the others, and almost instantly were acquainted with the views of Government, and its instructions as regarded the political situation.

Hamley thus sums up the effect of the telegraph on strategy :—

“ When armies are manœuvring on any other than concentrated fronts the telegraph may exercise influence in two ways :

\* General Haupt, Superintendent of Railroads in the Campaigns of Virginia, in a letter to Bigelow, author of “The Principles of Strategy.”

"1st. It will enable the general to combine in one view intelligence of what is simultaneously taking place in distant parts of his front. The conclusions he will form of how far his own plan is likely to be accomplished, and of what the enemy is seeking to effect, will thus be more likely to be correct than if he received at intervals information of a state which may already, when he learns it, have ceased to exist, or be beyond his power to control."

"2nd. It enables the general to transmit orders for simultaneous action to distant parts of his forces, and to impart to movements of an army on an extended front the decisive and co-operative character of those which are performed under his immediate control." \*

"One important effect will be felt, on both sides, in the avoidance of hypothetical or conditional orders (always fruitful sources of error), and the correction of those which are misunderstood, or fail of being obeyed with sufficient exactness." \*

"On the whole, it appears that telegraphs will diminish, sometimes in a considerable degree, the disadvantage under which a divided force operates against a concentrated force, and that they will enable a general to divide his army, whether for defence or attack, with more confidence than heretofore. But they will not often remedy, in an appreciable degree, the ignorance of what is passing behind an enemy's front, and its consequences. False theories of his intentions will still be formed, and the false movements which spring from them will often be beyond remedy." \*

"So long as opposing armies are concentrated, its influence will be confined chiefly to transmitting immediate intelligence and directions between the headquarters and the communications with the rear, or between the general-in-chief and the commanders of wings, and both parties may be expected to derive from it the same advantages. It is when armies are in presence of each other on extended fronts that instant intelligence may affect the result, and chiefly in those cases where concerted action is essential to success, but is rendered uncertain by intervening distances or obstacles." \*

In 1810 Masséna was threatening Portugal from the River Zezere, north of the Tagus. Soult, in Estremadura, south of the Tagus, was intended to co-operate with Masséna. The two French commanders were operating on double exterior lines as compared with Wellington, who held a central position between the two. It was important to the two French commanders to have an uninterrupted knowledge of each other's movements and plans. This they were unable to secure. Hence Masséna, without assistance from Soult, moved forward alone for the

\* Hamley, "Operations of War."

invasion of Portugal along the line of the Mondego. Wellington, aware that Soult was not acting in combination with Masséna, concentrated at Busaco, there defeated the French general, and then retired to the lines of Torres Vedras, with the result described in the outline of that campaign already given.\*

Our campaigns in North America are good illustrations showing how, by the time news had reached England and instructions consequent on the receipt thereof had been received in America, the whole position had entirely altered. Many were the mistakes committed both by the leaders in the field and by the home Government, owing to misconceptions of the situation, and to orders and counter-orders, all due to lack of knowledge of affairs as they existed at the moment.

On the other hand, generals have been known to destroy the telegraph lines linking them with the home Government, so as to put a stop to futile and contradictory orders. This, it is alleged, was done in the American Civil War. But the general who thus destroys his connecting lines incurs a grave and serious responsibility. The general in the field, when all is said, is under the orders of his Government. If that Government persists in issuing instructions which lead to operations contrary to the expressed advice and wishes of the general in the field (the man who is on the spot, and who is therefore in a better position to understand the situation as it is), then, should evil consequences ensue, it is the Government that is responsible, not the general, and the blame and the responsibility must be shared by the nation which put the Government in power and kept it there.

#### DISADVANTAGE OF THE TELEGRAPH.

The disadvantage of the telegraph is supposed to lie in the fact that news of future plans and projects, and of the commencement and progress of movements, which it is desirable to conceal up to the last possible moment, is often obtained from information gleaned by an enemy's agents abroad and transmitted by them to their own headquarters. This is no doubt true to a certain extent, but the disadvantage applies equally to either belligerent. Moreover, the argument as to the disadvantage of the telegraph in this respect is much exaggerated. Certainly no great movement, such as that made by Marlborough in his campaign of 1704, could now be possible without some information being received by an opponent, and yet recent military history affords an example of a transfer of a large army from one part to another without the enemy being in the least aware that such a project was contemplated, and had been actually carried out. The official account of the "History of

\* See *ante*, p. 161.

the Campaign of 1882 in Egypt" states "that the newspapers helped to form an admirable screen under which the plan which had been kept constantly in view was being developed and put in practice."

The plan referred to was the transfer of Sir Garnet Wolseley's army from Alexandria to Ismailia. It has already been related how this movement was quite unknown to the Egyptian leaders.\*

It would appear then, that, provided proper and adequate precautions be taken, leakage of news should not be possible to any great extent.†

In conclusion, it will not be out of place to draw a comparison between a few campaigns which took place prior to the introduction of steam and telegraphy and those of more modern times, and to do this it will be unnecessary to go outside the campaigns already quoted. If the reader will refer to Abercrombie's Egyptian campaign,‡ he will find that the strategic plan for the expulsion of the French from Egypt embraced the co-operation of an Indian contingent. That co-operation practically failed, owing to the non-arrival of the troops under Sir David Baird in time to take part in the more important phase of the campaign. The force started from India as early as possible, but its date of departure was unknown to Abercrombie. The transports, dependent upon their sails, were delayed and buffeted by contrary winds, taking weeks to cover a distance which could now be traversed by means of steamers in as many days. Compare the concentration of these forces and their combination with Lord Wolseley's Egyptian campaign, 1882—eighty years later—when the date of departure of each steamer, and its date of arrival, could be estimated almost to an hour by the British general.

The mobilisation and the despatch of troops from the four quarters of the world to South Africa were not only facilitated but were rendered possible by steam and the telegraph. The date of departure of each steamer, its progress, and date of arrival on the South African coast, were accurately known in London, and at the headquarters of the army in Africa. The arrival of troops from India in time to save a critical situation in Natal would have been impossible but for latter-day inventions. Suppose other conditions to be the same, but the steam and the telegraph non-existent, and let the reader imagine for himself,

\* See ante, p. 192.

† The author happened to be in Japan during the opening phases of the land campaign (1904). In Tokio nothing was known as to the movements of the Japanese forces, except what the Japanese Government permitted to be known. All other so-called "news" was quite unreliable and was mere rumour, which came via London and Shanghai.

‡ See ante, p. 78.

if he will, upon what lines the campaign would have been worked, the eventual decision, and the ensuing result upon the history of the world.

The necessity of a proper study of the military geography of any possible theatre of war has already been insisted upon; it is unnecessary here to emphasise its importance, except to say that a geographical study of any given country should not be limited to its physical features only, but should include the whole of its resources, and, above all, its system of railways and their carrying capacity, as well as its telegraph system.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### COMMAND OF THE SEA.

Importance to Britain of Command of the Sea—Command of the Sea with Reference to India—Command of the Sea with Reference to America—Lord Bacon and Richard Cobden on the Command of the Sea.

#### Preliminary Remarks.

MILITARY and naval strategy are the two factors which together form what may be called imperial strategy; imperial strategy being that which concerns itself with the attack and defence of the whole empire. Command of the sea, which ensures protection of the sea lines of communications of an army, is the link which binds the army to the navy. The means and method whereby command of the sea is ensured are the province of naval strategy, and therefore beyond the scope of this book. That the land strategy of British armies is intimately connected with, and entirely dependent on, the strategy of the ocean is a fact fully recognised and admitted by all. This being so, an attempt to outline shortly, not how command of the sea is acquired and maintained, but how and in what manner it affects nearly every British operation on land, great or small, will not be inappropriate.

It is obvious that England being an island, her wars must be wars beyond the seas. Hence the safety and security of the sea lines of communications are an absolute essential to success. If the sea lines be not safeguarded and sure, but liable to be cut and raided by the fleet of any hostile Power, and the transports conveying troops, warlike stores, and supplies sunk or captured, an element of extreme uncertainty is at once introduced into every problem of strategy. No satisfactory solution can be hoped for or expected until this factor of uncertainty is eliminated. It will be impossible for a general to formulate a plan of campaign on land, commence operations based on his scheme, and conduct the same to a successful conclusion, if the transports which carry the reinforcements and supplies for his army be intercepted. Under such conditions, the general, and the army he commands, are merely existing; he and his troops are at the mercy of the admiral commanding

a hostile fleet, perhaps hundreds of miles distant from the coast of the actual theatre of war.

But the influence on land strategy exerted by command of the sea is not limited to protection of the sea lines of communications of an army. It is closely connected also with all considerations concerning the selection of a base line and the choice of a base point in that line, when the base of the theatre of operations happens to be the sea coast. Moreover, command of the sea, when the coast is a base line of operations, permits as much or as little of that base being used as may be needed, and it further affords all the advantages which may be derived from any particular configuration of the sea coast. All these advantages permit of strategic movements being undertaken, which would otherwise be impossible.

The command of the sea in the Peninsular campaign, apart from ensuring the safety of the sea lines of communications, permitted a selection of any base on the coasts of Spain and Portugal. Thus Santarem, Corunna, Oporto, Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Valencia, Tarragona were all used as base points when occasion and the necessity arose. If the situation had been reversed, that is, if command of the sea had been in the hands of the French, the campaign of Corunna would have finished the war.

When Great Britain has not had command of the sea, or when that command has been insecure and uncertain, the consequences have always been fatal.

If our campaigns in two such widely separated spheres of interest as India and North America be studied and compared, it will be seen how command of the sea, maintained as regards the lines of communications with India, enabled us to maintain the footing there gained, and indirectly led us to far greater conquests in that Peninsula; how as regards America, command of the sea, always insecure and eventually altogether lost, directly led to the abandonment of the war in that continent.

#### Command of the Sea with Reference to India.

In March, 1757, a French fleet was despatched from Brest, and it appeared off the Coromandel coast on the 26th April, 1758. Two naval actions (29th April, 1758, and the 10th September, 1759) were fought between the respective naval commanders, Pocock (British) and d'Ache (French). Both these actions were in themselves indecisive, that is, neither fleet gained any great advantage over the other. But the consequences in both instances were serious as regards their effects on the campaign on land. In the first case Port St. David, then besieged by the French, surrendered owing to the impossibility of relief by the British Fleet. In the second case the naval action, though in

itself indecisive, was very decisive as regarded the struggle between France and England as to who should be the future rulers of the Indian Empire. With regard to the later consequences of this naval action, Captain Mahan in his book, "The Influence of Sea Power upon History," says: "The fruits of victory, however, were with the weaker fleet; for d'Ache returned to Pondicherry and thence sailed on the 1st of the next month for the islands, leaving India to its fate. From that time the result was certain. The English continued to receive reinforcements from home, while the French did not; the men opposed to Tally were superior in ability: place after place fell, and in January, 1761, Pondicherry itself surrendered, surrounded by land and cut off by the sea. This was the end of the French, however, in India; for though Pondicherry and other possessions were restored at the peace, the English tenure was never again shaken, even under the attacks of the skilful and bold Suffren, who twenty years later met difficulties as great as d'Ache's with a vigour and conduct which the latter at a more hopeful moment failed to show."

In 1782-1783,\* five naval actions were fought off the Coromandel coast, and Ceylon, between the French and English fleets, commanded respectively by Suffren and Hughes. After the third naval action Suffren captured Trincomalee, which he forthwith made a naval base of operations. Had he been properly supported from Europe, no man can tell what Suffren, based on that post, might have been able to accomplish. For Suffren was an energetic and very capable officer, fully alive to the advantages of superiority at sea as regards all the operations on land which were then taking place. As it was, relying on himself alone, and practically without support, he effected a great deal, and he and his fleet were factors in the land struggle, which had always to be taken into account by those responsible for the British projects contemplated and in progress. After the fifth naval action, the British fleet returning to Madras abandoned the army, which at that time was engaged in the siege of Cuddalore. Suffren anchored off Cuddalore and landed men to help in the defence. The British blockading force was then in a dangerous position, for their supply ships had left the coast prior to the naval action, and their land communications were at the mercy of Tippoo's cavalry. Fortunately the situation was relieved and the danger averted by the conclusion of peace. If the reader pause to ask himself how it was that Suffren did not accomplish more than he actually did, the answer will be found in the fact that such naval as well as military reinforcements as were despatched from France to

\* February 17th, 1782; April 12th, 1782; July 6th, 1782; September 3rd, 1782; June 20th, 1783.

Suffren's assistance, in order to enable him to play a more important and decisive part in the struggle for the supremacy of the Indian Empire, were captured by the British fleet in European waters. Thus India was indirectly won not on its own seas and land, but off the coasts of France and Spain.

#### Command of the Sea with Reference to America.

The struggle for supremacy in America alternated with varying fortune from the outbreak of hostilities, 1775, till July, 1778. During this month, however, a new and decisive factor was introduced into the contest, and one which ultimately forced England to abandon the struggle. In 1778 Louis XIV. decided to take an active part in the American War of Independence, and despatched a fleet from Toulon (April, 1778), under command of Admiral Count d'Estaing, to co-operate with Washington. From the moment this fleet appeared off the American coast the conditions under which the campaign had been conducted were entirely changed.

No object would be gained, and indeed it would take up far too much space, to deal adequately with and give an account of the naval strategy displayed by the chief British naval commanders—Rodney and Hood, and their opponents, de Guichen and de Grasse. Neither will any attempt be made to show how the various movements and operations of the two fleets affected the land strategy during the period July, 1778, to October, 1781. But a short summary of the campaign of 1781 will not be out of place, inasmuch as it was the result of this campaign, planned and schemed by Washington on the assumption of the co-operation of the French fleet, which eventually led to Cornwallis's surrender at York Town, and so to the abandonment of the war by England.

At the end of April, 1781, Cornwallis, having resolved upon a campaign in Virginia, set out from Wilmington, abandoning the two Carolinas to their fate. After a series of operations between Cornwallis and Lafayette, the former took post at York Town in July.

Clinton, in the meanwhile, was at New York, facing Washington at White Plains, where that officer, having been joined by 6,000 French troops under de Rochambeau, was waiting the arrival of the French fleet under de Grasse, in order to make an attack on New York. Clinton knew that Washington was expecting de Grasse, but, supposing the British fleet under Rodney would be able to deal with it when it arrived, felt no great anxiety on this score. Then Washington learnt that the French fleet was under way, not for New York, but for the Chesapeake. Of this movement Clinton was in ignorance, still expecting an attack on New York. Washington, on hearing of

de Grasse's movement, conceived the project of breaking up his camp before New York, and marching south to join Lafayette before York Town, where in conjunction with the French fleet a good chance would present itself of capturing the place. He accordingly crossed and moved down the Hudson (August 23rd), then changed his line of march, and turned south through New Jersey to Lafayette. De Grasse had arrived at the Chesapeake August 30th, and there he was discovered by Admiral Graves on September 5th. But Admiral Graves had in reality been in search of de Barras with eight ships, and instead of finding him he encountered de Grasse with twenty-four. An indecisive naval action ensued, after which Graves returned to New York. Clinton at New York was perplexed at Washington's movements preparatory to marching south, which movements were but a feint to keep the English general in ignorance of his real design. However, in the beginning of September it became clear to Clinton that Washington was on the march for Virginia, but, trusting still to the British fleet to counteract any designs of the French fleet, he felt little anxiety regarding the movements of the latter. As to the actual situation—namely, that de Grasse with a powerful fleet was in the Chesapeake—he possessed no knowledge till the return of Graves to New York acquainted him with the fact. The whole of Washington's force had effected a junction with Lafayette by September 26th. Two days later the siege of York Town by Washington's and Lafayette's combined forces commenced, and on October 17th Cornwallis capitulated. Clinton, delayed by damage to the fleet, had hastened, as soon as he could, to Cornwallis's relief; but, arriving too late, returned to New York, and the cessation of the campaign in North America may be said to date from the fall of York Town. Certainly, after the capitulation England made no real effort to retrieve her position.

The Indian and American campaigns are examples of the influence of sea power on operations on land. In the former campaign command of the sea was practically ensured, and the result thereof has been pointed out. In the latter, command of the sea, always insecure, and finally lost altogether for a time, directly led to the abandonment of the operations on land.

Naval strategy is outside the scope of this work, but it may be mentioned that in many of its essential principles it is similar to land strategy, especially with regard to concentration of force on the decisive point. One quotation from Mahan shows the principle of "interior lines" as applied by Britain's greatest admiral:—

"Severed apparently from all connection with the busy scene at Boulogne, Nelson before Toulon was wearing away the last two years of his glorious but suffering life, fighting the fierce north-westers of the Gulf of Lyon, and questioning, questioning

continually, with feverish anxiety, whether Napoleon's object was Egypt again or Great Britain really. They were dull, weary, eventless months, those months of watching and waiting of the big ships before the French arsenals. Purposeless they surely seemed to many, but they saved England. The world has never seen a more impressive demonstration of the influence of sea power upon its history. Those far distant storm-beaten ships, upon which the Grand Army never looked, stood between it and the dominion of the world. Holding the interior positions as they did before—and therefore between—the chief dockyards and detachments of the French navy, the latter could unite only by a concurrence of successful evasions, of which the failure of any one nullified the result. Linked together as the various British fleets were by chains of smaller vessels, chance alone could secure Bonaparte's great combination, which depended upon the covert concentration of several detachments upon a point practically within the enemy's lines. Thus, while bodily present before Brest, Rochefort, and Toulon, strategically the British squadrons lay in the Straits of Dover, barring the way against the army of invasion."\*

Every prominent British statesman and publicist from Bacon and Raleigh to Burke and Cobden has insisted upon the necessity to Great Britain of sea power. Bacon summarised in a prophetic fashion the whole course of our history since his time in one masterful passage in his essay on "The True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates":—

"To be master of the sea is an abridgiment of a monarchy. Cicero, writing to Atticus of Pompey's preparation against Cæsar, saith: 'Consilium Pompeii plane Themistocleum est; putat enim, qui mari potitur, eum rerum potiri,' and without doubt Pompey had tired out Cæsar, if upon vain confidence he had not left that way. We see the great effects of battles by sea: the battle of Actium decided the empire of the world; the battle of Lepanto arrested the greatness of the Turk. There be many examples where sea-fights have been final to the war; but this when princes or states have set up their rest upon the battles. But this much is certain, that he that commands the sea is at great liberty, and may take as much and as little of the war as he will; whereas those that be strongest by land are, nevertheless, many times in great straits. Surely at this day, with us of Europe the vantage of strength at sea (which is one of the principal dowries of this kingdom of Great Britain) is great; both because most of the kingdoms of Europe are not merely inland, but girt with the sea most part of their compass, and because the wealth of both Indies seems, in great part, but an accessory to the command of the seas."

\* Mahon's "Influence of Sea Power upon History." -

Cobden wrote:—

"If an enemy is our master at sea so as to be enabled to land an army and keep open his communications, he is capable of blockading us and starving us into subjection. We are like a garrison afloat, and our existence depends on our communications by sea being kept open."

It is unnecessary to labour this point further. It is an axiom of British policy, and if it is forgotten, British strategy, as well as British commerce, will disappear from history. "Unless we concentrate on what is vital," says Lieutenant Carlyon Bellairs, "it is all as glittering dust in the balance between peace and war. There is no case in history of an island being involved in war in which it was not clearly shown that the one vital element was the sea communications of that island, and therefore naval force alone was what vitally mattered in the initial stages of the war. If the island possessed transoceanic territories this truth is only emphasised, for the one binding element must be the free flow of shipping along the sea roads. We must, however, remember the relative ineffectiveness of a navy beyond the enemy's coast line, and be ready to project artillery, cavalry, and infantry, so as to press home the blows delivered upon the sea." \*

\* Extract from a lecture delivered by Lieutenant Carlyon Bellairs, R.N., at the Royal United Service Institution, June, 1904.

## CHAPTER XX.

## CONCLUSION.

A FEW words in conclusion. With reference to the principles of strategic manœuvre enumerated and explained in Part I., it will be as well to repeat the warning already given, that something more is required than merely to base a plan of operations on such and such a principle of strategic manœuvre, and then to imagine that the strategic conception is settled, and that all that remains to do is to execute the plan according to the principle selected; for to be too closely wedded to any one plan may lead a commander into fatal mistakes. The plan which it is proposed to put into execution will certainly be guided by one or a combination of the principles enumerated, but will not be altogether determined by them, though, again, whatever be the plan actually commenced and that ultimately pursued and executed, it will be found that the strategic movements will in the end resolve themselves into one or other, or a combination, of the five principles of strategic manœuvre stated.

Many of the influences which affect the principles of strategic manœuvre have been more or less dealt with in detail in Part II., but many have been merely noted, and some have been passed over altogether, such as logistic skill, mobility, surprise and stratagem in war, the element of chance and luck, knowledge of the enemy's designs and intelligence of his movements, and the organisation by which the troops in the field are fed, equipped, and supplied with warlike stores. All these factors are of great importance, as also are many others which, though common and trivial enough in themselves, produce, when neglected, the direst results.

The principles of strategy are based upon accumulated experience gained in the fields of many fights and ranging over hundreds of years. But inasmuch as unexpected elements may enter into any and every combination, all that it is possible to do is to inform the mind with principles which will furnish guidance at all times and circumstances widely different. There are, of course, the accidents of the moment to be reckoned with,

as well as unforeseen contingencies, which may so complicate the situation as to baffle the best intelligence in the science of war. But, other things being equal, success will attend those who by a detailed study of former campaigns have acquired so intimate a knowledge of the art of war in all its variations that when placed in circumstances of doubt and difficulty they will be able to recall to mind occasions analogous to the situation in which they find themselves, and so avoid the errors into which their predecessors may have fallen.

To the soldier who aspires to be a great leader, it is necessary that he possess not only imagination, but that spontaneity of conception which, recognising new elements and factors as they arise, will enable him to meet them by new and fitting combinations on his part. It is owing to these rare qualities in their character that the most celebrated generals have been able to accomplish so much, and it is because of their intuitive genius for war that men like Cromwell, unversed in military arts, have achieved such great things. At the same time, it must always be remembered that knowledge of even the most minute details is a help and not a hindrance, although no theoretical knowledge will atone for the absence of sound common sense.



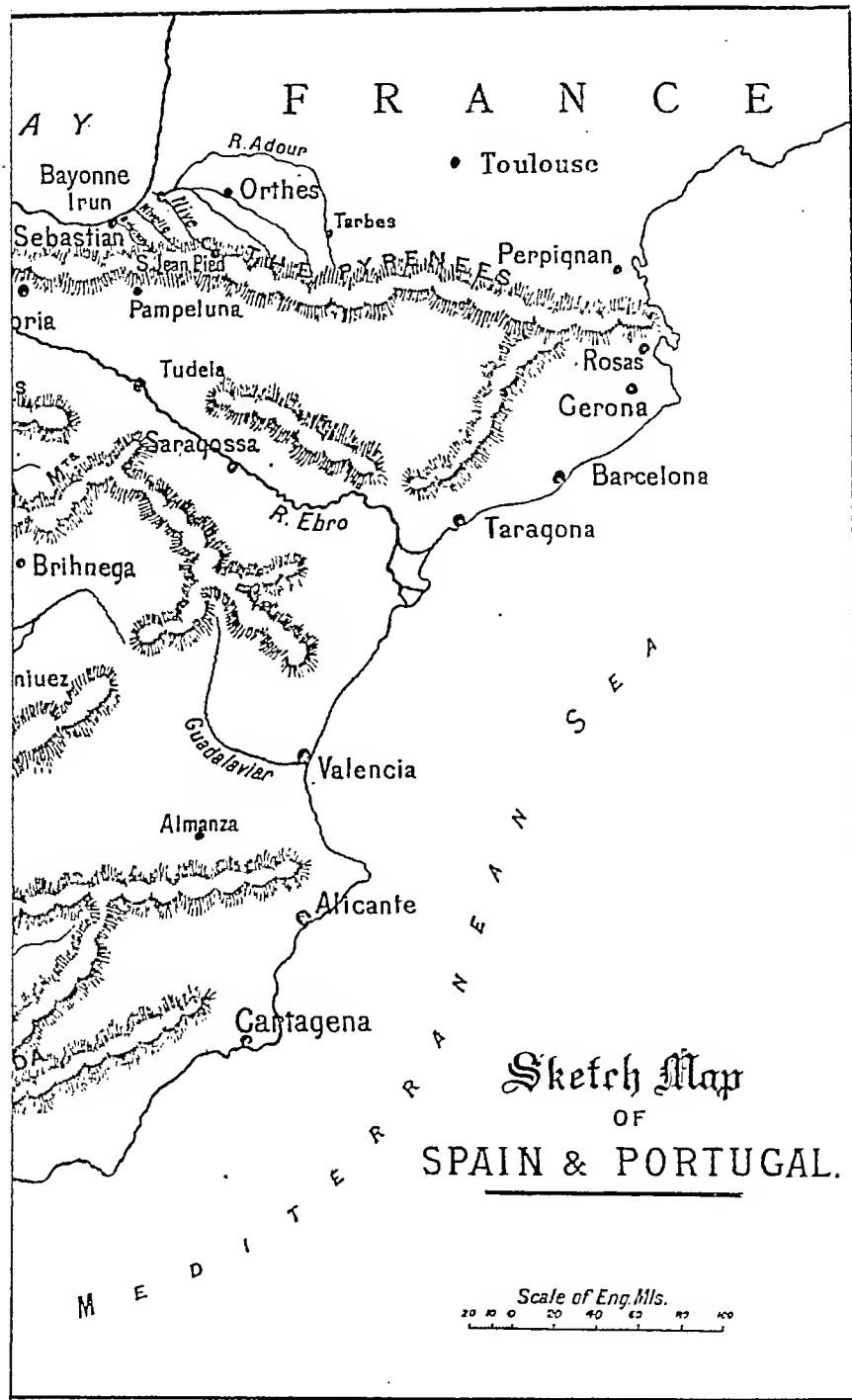
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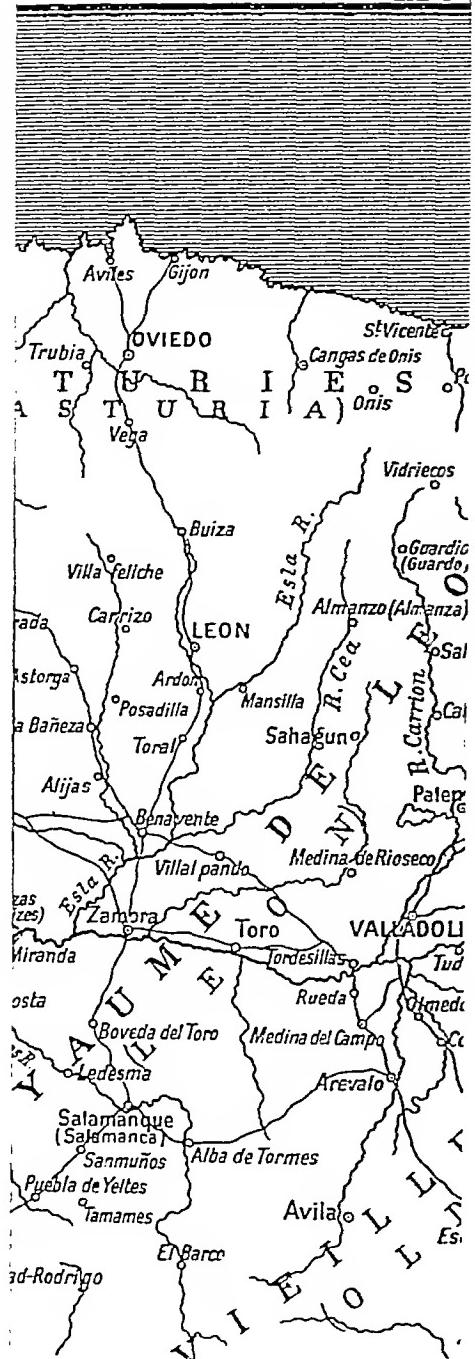
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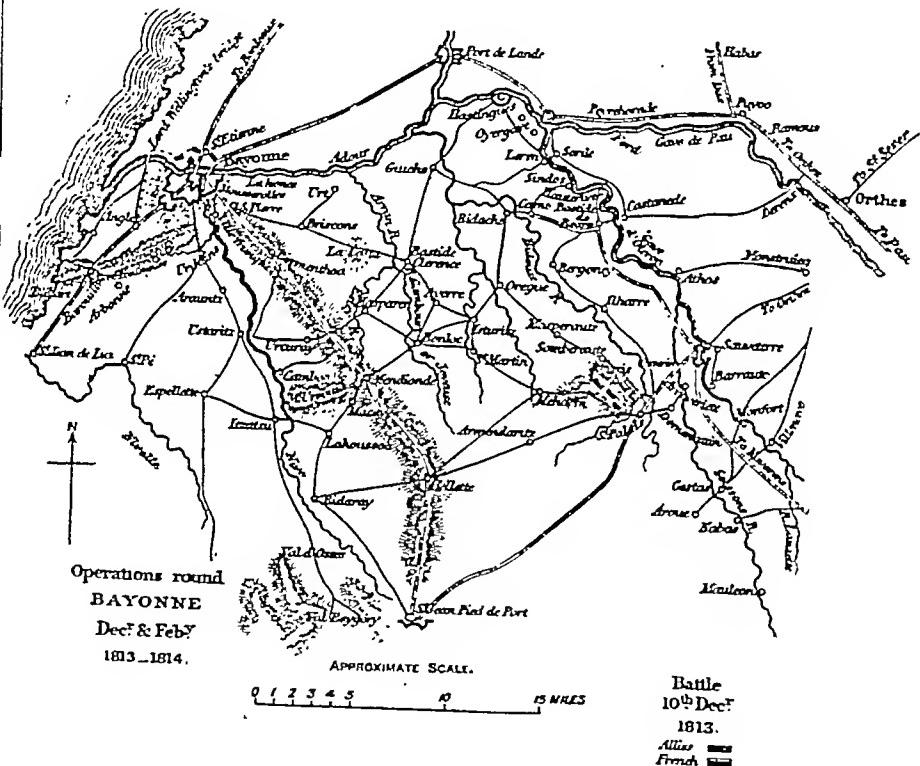




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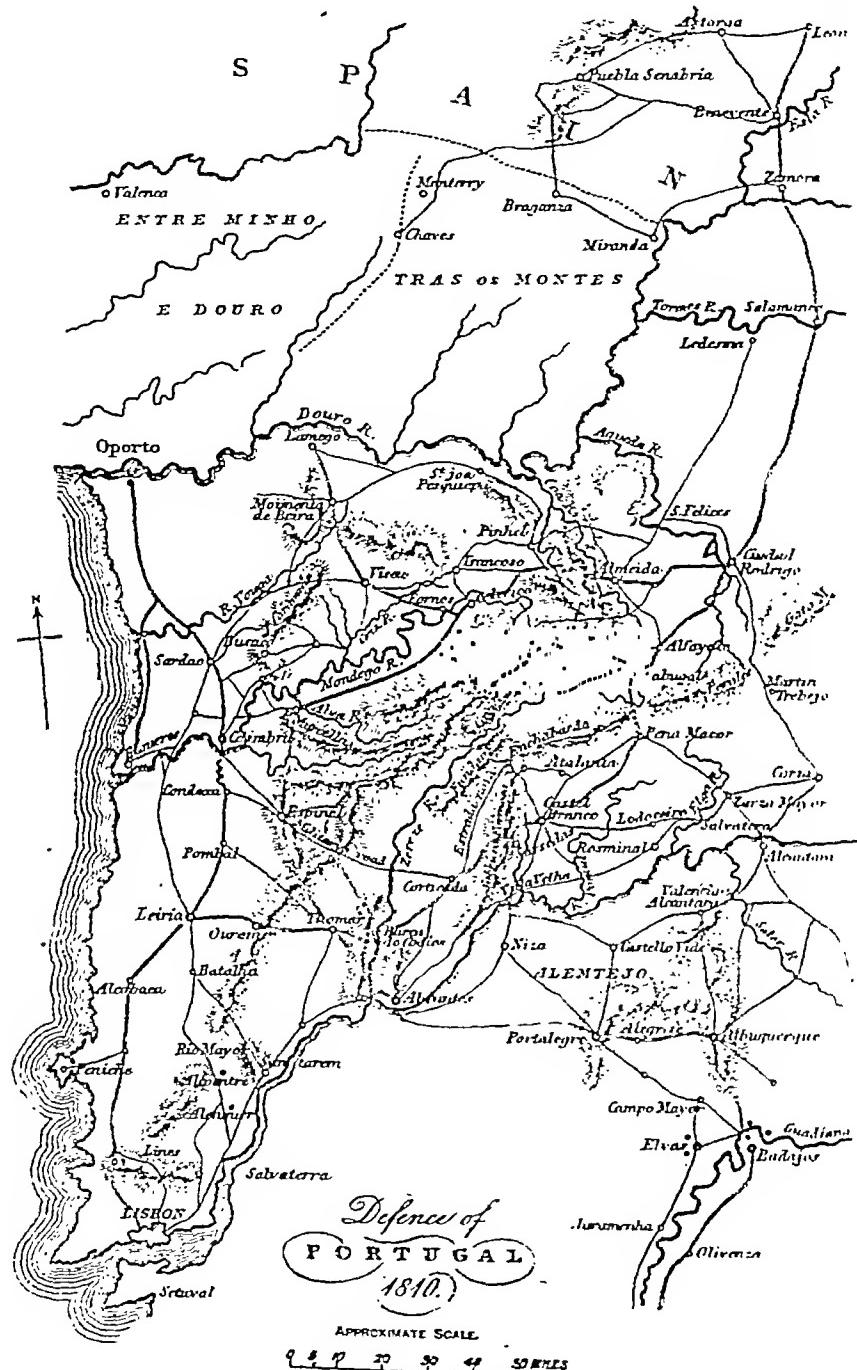
MAP IV.



(From Napier's "History of the War in the Peninsula.")



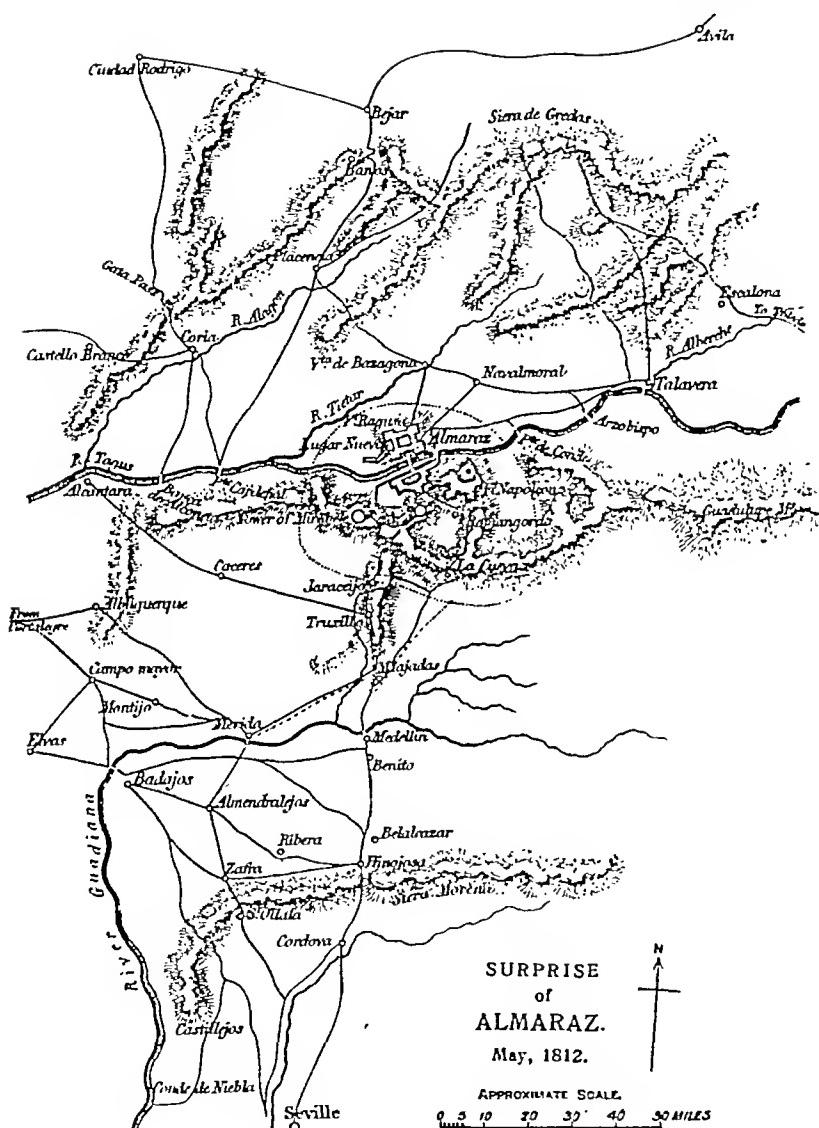
MAP VI.



(From Napier's "History of the War in the Peninsula.")

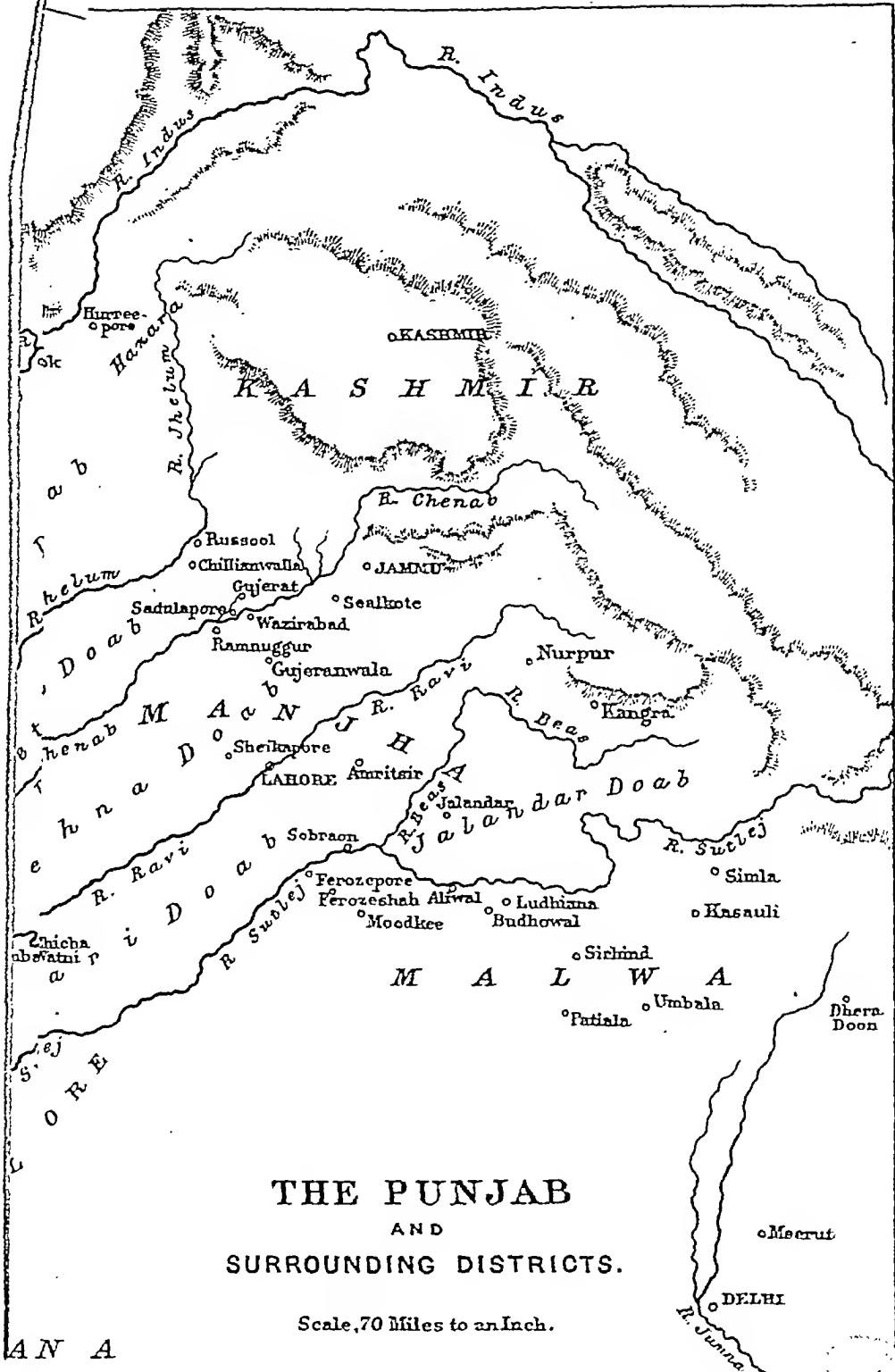


MAP VIII.



(From Napier's "History of the War in the Peninsula.")













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